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II

Adams

CORRESPONDENCE

OF THE

LATE PRESIDENT ADAMS.

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN THE BOSTON PATRIOT

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS.

NUMBER 1.

BOSTON:
PUBLISHED BY EVERETT AND MUNROE.
NO. 78, STATE-STREET.

1809.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS,

BY THE PUBLISHERS.

PREVIOUS to the establishment of the BOSTON PATRIOT, its Editor had been apprised, that the late PRESIDENT ADAMS had preserved and arranged the documents relative to those negociations, conducted principally by himself, which terminated in the acknowledgment of our Independence by Great Britain and the other leading powers of Europe—that he had also prepared his defence against the high and malignant charges of General HAMILTON, in a summary history of those parts of his administration which affected so tenderly the sensibility of that statesman and his adherents.

Amid our late concussions of party with party—of faction with government, the Editor of the Patriot indulged a sanguine, and as it has proved, prophetic hope, that this *ripened fruit*, so salutary for the nation, would fall from its venerable height.—That it should first pass through his hands to the public, was an honor equally flattering to his patriotism and his pride.

In the first part of this correspondence, in order of time, the illustrious writer may be considered as the *Æneas*, who bore with him the fortunes of a rising empire, and who, (*primus inter pares*, in all its councils,) could say without ostentation, "*magna pars fui.*"—In the latter, he appears like *Achilles*, brooding over insufferable personal wrongs, till roused to combat and to victory, by the call of his country in the extremity of her cause.

On such an occasion, *to have fought to the liking of the foe, would have been disgrace.*

That part of the correspondence, which may be termed controversial, has three honorable testimonials of intrinsic merit—the applause and gratitude of the once deceived enemies of the President, the rancorous ravings of those whose devotions to another country he has so effectually disturbed—and the respectful silence of a large portion of the community, who have run the endless round of political inconsistences, till they can approve nothing without condemning themselves.

In his farewell address, the acknowledged father of his country apprised us of its threatening malady. The parental hand that pointed out the disease, revolted from the cure and administered only a lenitive. It was reserved for the bolder guardian genius of an ADAMS, with decisive hand, to probe the growing tumor to its rankling core, and restore his darling country to sanity.

The portion of the correspondence which developes the negociations terminating in the peace and independence of America, comprises an es-

sential part of its history, and cannot surely have the less claim to our gratitude, because, while it does this, it shows also how much depended on the unwearied and effectual exertions of one of its first and greatest statesmen.

If, while contemplating the character of a revered patriot, and the merit and effect of his toils, the writer perceiving much to excite admiation, and something to enkindle enthusiasm, betray the partiality of the panegyrist; let him not be accused of acting the parasite, till some motive can be assigned, or till candor shall have pointed out some radical defect in hat character which has so long commanded the respect of the world.

It is not the writer's intention, nor is it necessary, to add a formal preface to a volume, which of all others in our language will speak most plainly and unequivocally for itself; but he has thought it his duty to look beyond the denunciations of the factious cabals of the day, and pay to exalted worth, that tribute of respect and gratitude, which will be acknowledged just by impartial posterity.

The following is inserted from the Patriot of April 7th, as explanatory to the introduction to the first letter—It may serve also as an epitome of the abuse of Mr. Adams, and a specimen of the style, bating some of its coarseness, exhibited by all our public papers, emphatically called *English.*

EXTRACT

From the Baltimore Federal Republican.

"MR. JOHN ADAMS' LETTER.

"Mr. Adams *never was* a favorite with the *leading men* of the federal party. He was not selected by them as the federal candidate for the Presidency in 1796; for they were sensible that he had neither abilities nor discretion to *lead a party*, much less to govern a nation. They had turned their eyes to Mr. Jay and would have nominated him for the Presidency, if Mr. Adams had not pertinaciously insisted upon what he called *his pretensions*, and declared that upon no terms would he withdraw. The federal gentlemen knowing his popularity in Massachusetts, and unwilling to risk the consequences of division, ceased to oppose him, predicting at the same time that he would *ruin the party. This prediction has been accomplished.* The federal party was considered responsible for his acts, some of which were of a nature to bring odium and ridicule upon any administration. We need only instance the *mission to France* in 1799.—The heads of departments remonstrated against his measures, when the passionate and obstinate old man abused them in the grossest terms and dismissed them from office. Such is the nature of Mr. Adams' connection with the federal party. He obtruded himself upon them, and then adopted measures to which they were opposed, but for which they were made responsible, and thus destroyed the influence of the party."

CORRESPONDENCE

OF THE

LATE PRESIDENT ADAMS.

LETTER I.

To the Printers of the Boſton Patriot,

SIRS,

I WAS glad to see in your paper of the 7th of this month, the extract from the *Baltimore Federal Republican*, for many reasons, which may be explained in due time; one or two may be stated now.

1. I was pleased with the candid acknowledgment, that "Mr. Adams never was a favorite with the *leading men* of the federal party." The words *leading men* will require ſome explanation, and ſome limitations and reſtrictions, which may hereafter appear. But in general, this is a truth which I have known for twenty years, though it has never been publicly avowed, to my knowledge, till now.

2. I am happy to ſee what I conſider as an acknowledgment, that my unpardonable ſin againſt the federal party, or rather againſt thoſe *leading men*, was the peace with France in 1800: an event which has given this country eight years of its moſt ſplendid proſperity. The writer mentions the miſſion to France in 1799, as a meaſure which brought odium and ridicule on my adminiſtration. If you will allow me a little room in your PATRIOT, I may hereafter produce proofs to the ſatisfaction of

the public, that this measure was neither odious nor ridiculous. At this time I will only send you a communication from Gen. WASHINGTON, by which it will appear that the subject was not seen by that great ornament of his country in the same light in which this writer sees it.

Mount Vernon, 1st Feb. 1799.

DEAR SIR,

The letter herewith enclosed, from Mr. Joel Barlow, though of old date, came to my hands only yesterday. I have conceived it to be my duty to transmit it to you without delay and without a comment, except that it must have been written with a very good or a very bad design—which of the two, you can judge better than I. For, from the known abilities of that gentleman, such a letter could not be the result of ignorance, *in him*, nor from the implications which are to be found in it, has it been written without the privity of the French Directory. It is incumbent on me to add, that I have not been in the habit of corresponding with Mr. Barlow. The letter now forwarded is the first I ever received from him: and to him I have never written one. If then you should be of opinion that his is calculated to bring on negociation upon open, fair and honorable ground, and merits a reply, and will instruct me as to the tenor of it, I shall with pleasure and alacrity obey your orders: more especially if there is reason to believe that it would become a mean, however small, of restoring peace and tranquility to the United States, upon just, honorable and dignified terms, *which I am persuaded is the ardent desire of all the friends of this rising Empire.* With great consideration and respect, I have the honor to be, dear sir, your most obedient and very humble servant,

G. WASHINGTON.

J. ADAMS, President of the United States.

The letter from Mr. BARLOW, enclosed in General WASHINGTON'S, is in these words:

Paris, 2d Oct. 1798.

SIR,

On hearing of your late nomination as Commander in Chief of the American armies, I rejoice at it, not because I believe the war which that nomination contemplates is yet inevitable, and that it will furnish an occasion for a further display of your military talents, but because it may enable you to exert your influence to a greater effect, in preventing the war. By becoming more the centre of information than you could be in your retirement, you will be better able to judge of the dispositions of both countries, and to offer such counsels to your government as may tend to remove the obstacles that will oppose themselves to a reconciliation.—Were you now President of the United States, I should not address you this letter, because, not knowing my inclination for the tranquility of a retired life, you might think that I was seeking a place, or had some farther object in view, than the simple one of promoting peace between the two republics. But I hope, under present circumstances, that you will believe my motive to be pure and unmixed, and that the object of my letter is to call your attention to the true state of facts.

Perhaps few men, who cannot pretend to have been in the secrets of either government, are in a better situation than myself to judge of the motives of both; to assign the true causes, and trace out the progress of their unhappy misunderstanding, or to appreciate their present dispositions, pretensions and wishes. I am certain there is none who labors more sincerely for the restoration of harmony, upon terms honorable to the United States and advantageous to the cause of liberty.

I will not in this place, go over the history of past transactions. It would be of little use.—The object is to seize the malady in its present state and try to arrest its progress. The dispute at this moment, may be characterized simply and literally speaking, a *misunderstanding*.—I

cannot perſuade myſelf to give it a harſher name, as it applies to either government. It is clear that neither of them has an intereſt in going to war with the other, and I am equally convinced that neither of them has the inclination; that is, I believe the balance of inclination as well as of intereſt, on both ſides, is in favor of peace. But each government, though ſenſible of this truth with reſpect to itſelf, is ignorant of it with reſpect to the other. Each believes the other determined on war, and aſcribes all its conduct to a deep-rooted hoſtility. The leaſt they can do, therefore, under this impreſſion, is to prepare for an event which they both believe inevitable, while they both wiſh to avoid it. But by what fatality is it that a calamity ſo dreadful muſt be rendered inevitable becauſe it is thought ſo? Both governments have tongues and both have ears. Why will they not ſpeak? Why will they not liſten? The cauſes that have hitherto prevented them are not difficult to aſſign. I could eaſily explain them, as I believe, to the ſatisfaction of both parties, and without throwing ſo much blame on either government, as each of them at preſent aſcribes to the other. But I will avoid ſpeaking of any paſt provocation on either ſide. The point that I wiſh to eſtabliſh in your mind is, that the French Directory is at preſent ſincerely deſirous of reſtoring harmony between this country and the United States, on terms honorable and advantageous to both parties. I wiſh to convince you of this, and through you, the American government; becauſe that government being deſirous of the ſame thing, would not fail to take ſuch ſteps as would lead immediately to the object.

In offering you my proofs of the preſent diſpoſition on this ſide, you will permit me to obſerve, that ſome of them are from their nature incapable of being detailed, and others improper to be truſted to the caſualties of a letter. —But I will mention a few that are oſtenſible, and so far as they go undeniable. Firſt, the Directory has declared that it will receive and treat with any Miniſter from America, who ſhall appear to be ſent with a ſincere intention of treating and terminating exiſting difficulties.

I have no doubt but this was the intention when the laſt Envoys were ſent: but from ſome unfortunate circumſtances the Directory did not believe it. Second, as a preliminary, it has been declared that in the negociation there ſhall be no queſtion of loans of money, or apologies for offenſive ſpeeches pronounced by the executive on either ſide. Third, all commiſſions given to privateers in the Weſt-Indies are recalled, and when new commiſſions are iſſued, the owners and commanders are to be reſtricted under bonds, to the legal object of capture.—Fourth, an embargo that was laid on American ſhips within the republic, in conſequence of a report that war had been begun on the part of the United States, was taken off as ſoon as it was aſcertained that ſuch war had not been begun. And a new declaration was at the ſame time ſent to America of the wiſhes of France to treat. Theſe facts will doubtleſs come to your knowledge through other channels, before you receive this letter. But there are other facts which in my mind are equally clear, though to you will be deſtitute of corroborating circumſtances and muſt reſt on my own information and opinion. 1ſt. That this government contemplates a juſt indemnity for ſpoliations on American commerce, to be aſcertained by commiſſioners in a manner ſimilar to the one preſcribed in our treaty with England. 2d. That the legiſlation will ſoon be changed here with reſpect to neutrals, and that all flags will be put on the footing of the law of nations. 3d. That a public agent would have been named and ſent to Philadelphia ſoon after Mr. Gerry's departure, were it not for the apprehenſions that he would not have been received. There was a doubt whether the American government would not have already taken ſuch meaſures of hoſtility as to be unwilling to liſten to terms of accommodation, and the Directory did not chooſe to riſque the chance of ſeeing its offers refuſed. 4th. That the Directory conſiders theſe declarations and tranſactions as a ſufficient overture on its part. That it has *retreated* to an open ground that is quite unſuſpicious. That a refuſal on the part of the American government

to meet on this ground, will be followed by immediate war, and that it will be a war of the moſt terrible and vindictive kind.

This, ſir, is my view of the preſent ſtate of facts. Should it make that impreſſion on your mind, which I deſire for the ſake of humanity that it may, you will judge whether it does not comport with the independence of the United States and the dignity of their government, to ſend another miniſter to form new treaties with the French republic. In a war there is clearly nothing to be gained by us, not even honor.—Honor indeed may be ſaved by war, and ſo it may be by negociation. But the calamities inſeparable from a war of this kind, and under preſent circumſtances, would be incalculable. I do not ſay that the United States or any portion of them would be conquered; but they would ſacrifice great numbers of their beſt citizens, burthen themſelves with four times their preſent debt, overturn the pureſt ſyſtem of morals, and loſe the faireſt opportunity that ever a nation had of riſing to greatneſs and happineſs on the baſis of liberty.

Were I writing to a young General, whoſe name was ſtill to be created, I might deem it uſeleſs to aſk him to ſtifle in its birth a war on which he had founded his hopes of future honors. But you, ſir, having already earned and acquired all thoſe that can render a man great and happy, can ſurely have no object of ambition but to render your country ſo. To engage your influence in favor of a new attempt at negociation, I thought it only neceſſary to convince you that ſuch an attempt would be well received here, and probably attended with ſucceſs. I can do no more than aſſure you that this is my ſincere opinion, and that my information is drawn from unſuſpected ſources.

I am not accuſtomed to interpoſe my advice in the adminiſtration of any country, and ſhould not have done it now, did I not believe it my duty as a citizen of my own, and a friend to all others. I ſee two great nations ruſhing on each others bayonets, without any other cauſe of contention but a miſunderſtanding. I ſhudder at the

prospect and wish to throw myself between the vans, and suspend the onset, till a word of explanation can pass. I hope my letter will have thrown some light upon the subject; but if it shall not, I hope you will excuse the attempt, for you know my zeal is honest. I have the honor to be, sir, with great respect, your most obedient and most humble servant,

JOEL BARLOW.

To Gen. Washington.

Neither Mr. Barlow's letter nor General Washington's opinion would have influenced me to nominate a minister, if I had not received abundant assurances to the same effect from regular diplomatic sources. I, however, considered General Washington's question whether Mr. Barlow's was written with a very good or a very bad design; and as with all my jealousy I had not sagacity enough to discover the smallest room for suspicion of any ill design, I frankly concluded that it was written with a very good one.

From General Washington's letter it appears, 1st. That it was his opinion that the restoration of peace upon just, honorable and dignified terms, was the ardent desire of all the friends of this rising empire. 2d. That he thought negociation might be brought on, upon open, fair and honorable ground. 3d. That he was so desirous of peace, that he was willing to enter into correspondence with Mr. Barlow, a private gentleman, without any visible credentials or public character, or responsibility to either government, in order to bring on a public negociation. Gen. Washington, therefore, could not consider the negociation odious.

JOHN ADAMS.

Quincy, April 10, 1809.

LETTER II.

THE inſtitution of an embaſsy to France in 1799, was made upon principle, and in conformity to a ſyſtem of foreign affairs, formed upon long deliberation, eſtabliſhed in my mind, and amply opened, explained and ſupported in Congreſs, that is a ſyſtem of eternal Neutrality, if poſſible, in all the wars of Europe, at leaſt eighteen years before Preſident Waſhington's Proclamation of Neutrality in 1794.—For the truth of the antiquity of this ſyſtem, I appeal to Judge Chaſe, who made the firſt motion in Congreſs for entering into foreign relations. This motion was made in concert with me, and was ſeconded by me. If I am incorrect in any circumſtance, that gentleman can ſet me right. And here I feel a pride in acknowledging that perhaps no two Members of Congreſs were at that time upon more intimate terms. We flickered, diſputed, and wrangled in public and private, but always with a ſpecies of good humor that never was ſuffered to diminiſh the confidence, eſteem, or affection of either in the other. I have long wiſhed for a fair opportunity of tranſmitting to poſterity my humble teſtimony to the virtues and talents of that able and upright magiſtrate and ſtateſman.

Our ſyſtem was to form Treaties of Commerce with France, Spain, Holland, and all the other Nations of Europe, even with England herſelf, upon a footing of entire equality: but by no means to form any political or military connections with any power in Europe, or engage in any hoſtilities againſt any, unleſs driven to them by neceſſity to ſupport our independence and honor, or our juſt and neceſſary intereſts. In what manner and by whoſe means this plan has ever been abandoned in any degree, I could detail from ſtep to ſtep, but it would require a volume, and is not neceſſary here. It has never been forgotten by me, but the rectitude and wiſdom of it has been confirmed by every year's and day's experience from 1776 to 1799, and indeed to 1809.

This introduction will be called pompous, no doubt, and it will be thought an aſtoniſhing inſtance of the bathos, to deſcend from Judge Chaſe to Mr. Logan, but my plan requires it.

With this ſyſtem clear in my head, and deeply impreſſed upon my heart, it was with the utmoſt reluctance that I found myſelf under a neceſſity in 1798, of having recourſe to hoſtilities againſt France. But the conduct of that government had been ſo unjuſt, arbitrary and inſolent, as to become intolerable. I therefore animated this nation to war; determined, however, to liſten to every propoſal, and embrace the firſt opportunity to reſtore peace, whenever it could be done conſiſtently with the honor and intereſt of the country. In this ſpirit I gave all due attention and conſideration to Gen. Waſhington's and Mr. Barlow's letter: nor was I wholly inattentive to a multitude of other circumſtances, ſome of which ſhall be mentioned.

Perhaps at no period of our connection with France has there ever been ſuch a flood of private letters from that country to this, as in the winter 1798 and 1799. The contents of many of them were directly or indirectly communicated to me. They were all in a ſimilar ſtrain with that of Mr. Barlow, that the French government had changed their ground, and were ſincerely diſpoſed to negociation an accommodation. I will inſtance only two. Mr. *Codman*, of Boſton, wrote largely and explicitly to his friends to the ſame purpoſe, and his worthy brother, the late Mr. *John Codman*, of Boſton, not only communicated to me the ſubſtance of his brother's letters but thanked me, in warm terms, for opening a negociation; and added, that every true friend of this country who was not poiſoned with party ſpirit, would thank me for it and ſupport me in it. Mr. *Nathaniel Cutting*, a Conſul in France, under Preſident *Waſhington*'s appointment, and a ſenſible man, wrote almoſt as largely as Mr. *Barlow*, and to the ſame effect.

I ſhall conclude this letter with another anecdote. Mr. Logan, of Philadelphia, a gentleman of fortune and edu-

cation, and certainly not deſtitute of abilities, who had for ſeveral years been a member of the Legiſlature of Pennſylvania, and has ſince been a ſenator of the United States, though I knew he had been one of the old conſtitutional party in that ſtate, and a zealous diſciple of that democratical ſchool, which has propagated many errors in America, and, perhaps, many tragical cataſtrophies in Europe, went to France, either with the pretext or the real deſign of improving his knowledge in agriculture and ſeeing the practice of it in that country. I had no reaſon to believe him a corrupt character or deficient in memory or veracity. After his return, he called upon me, and in a polite and reſpectful manner informed me that he had been honored with converſations with Talleyrand, who had been well acquainted with me, and repeatedly entertained at my houſe, and now viſited me at his requeſt to expreſs to me the deſire of the Directory as well as his own, to accommodate all diſputes with America, and to forget all that was paſt; to requeſt me to ſend a miniſter from America, or to give credentials to ſome one already in Europe, to treat; and to aſſure me that my miniſter ſhould be received, and all diſputes accommodated in a manner that would be ſatisfactory to me and my country. I knew the magical words, Democrat and Jacobin, were enough to deſtroy the credibility of any witneſs with ſome people. But not ſo with me. I ſaw marks of candor and ſincerity in this relation that convinced me of its truth.

But the teſtimonies of Mr. Codman, Mr. Cutting, Mr. Barlow, and Mr. Logan, and all other private communications, though they might convince my own mind, would have had no influence to diſpoſe me to nominate a miniſter, if I had not received authentic, regular, official, diplomatic aſſurances, which may be ſent you in another letter.

JOHN ADAMS.

Quincy, April, 1809.

LETTER III.

FROM Mr. Murray, the American Miniſter at the Hague, who had been appointed by Preſident Waſhington, I received aſſurances from the French government ſimilar to thoſe in Mr. Barlow's letter and ſo many others. They were conveyed from the French Directory to Mr. Pichon, Secretary of Legation and Charge des Affaires of the French Republic near the Batavian Republic, in the abſence of the French Ambaſſador, by him officially communicated to Mr. Murray and by him to the Executive of the United States. The communication was in theſe words :—

[*Tranſlation.*]

EXTERIOR RELATIONS.
3D DIVISION.

N. B. The good order of the Correſpondence requires, the answer should relate the number of the division above indicated.

LIBERTY. EQUALITY.
French Seal of the Department of Exterior Relations.

PARIS, the 7th Vendimaire, of the 7th year of the French Republic, one and indiviſible.

The Miniſter of Exterior Relations to Citizen PICHON, *Secretary of Legation of the French Republic, near the Batavian Republic.*

I have received ſucceſſively, citizen, your letters of the 22d and 23d Fructidore. They afford me more and more reaſon to be pleaſed with the meaſure you have adopted to detail to me your converſations with Mr. Murray. Theſe converſations, at firſt merely friendly, have acquired conſiſtency by the ſanction I have given to them, by my letter of the eleventh Fructidore. I do not regret that you have truſted to Mr. Murray's honor a copy of my letter. It was intended for you only, and contains nothing but what is conformable to the intentions of government. *I am thoroughly convinced that ſhould explanations take place, with confidence, between the two Cabinets irritation would ceaſe ; a croud of miſunderſtandings would diſappear ; and the ties of friendſhip would be more ſtrongly united, as each party would diſcover the hand which ſought*

to disunite them. But I will not conceal from you that your letters of the 2d and 3d Vendimaire, just received, surprise me much. What Mr. Murray is still dubious of, has been very explicitly declared even before the President's message to Congress, of the 3d Messidore, (21st of June) last, was known in France. I had written it to Mr. Gerry, namely, on the 24th Messidore, and the 4th Messidore. I did repeat it to him before he sat out. A whole paragraph of my letter to you of the 11th Fructidore, of which Mr. Murry has a copy, is devoted to develope still more the fixed determination of the French Republic. According to these bases you were right to assert that *whatever Plenipotentiary the government of the United States might send to France, to put an end to the existing differences between the two countries, would be undoubtedly received with the respect due to the representative of a free, independent, and powerful nation.* I cannot persuade myself, citizen, that the American Government need any further declarations from us to induce them, in order to renew the negociations, to adopt such measures as would be suggested to them, by their desire to bring the differences to a peaceable end. If misunderstandings on both sides have prevented former explanations from reaching that end, it is presumable that these misunderstandings being done away, nothing, henceforth, will bring obstacles to the reciprocal dispositions. The President's instructions to his envoys at Paris, which I have only known by the copy given you by Murray, and received by me the 21st Messidore, (9th July) announce, if they contain the whole of the American government's intentions, and dispositions, which could only have added to those which the directory has always entertained; and notwithstanding the posterior acts of that government, notwithstanding the irritating and almost hostile measures they have adopted, *the Directory* has manifested its perseverance in the sentiments which are deposited both in my correspondence with Mr. Gerry, and in my letter to you of the 11th Fructidore, and which I have herein before repeated in the most explicit manner. Carry, therefore, citizen, to

Mr. Murray, thoſe poſitive expreſſions, in order to convince him of our ſincerity, and prevail upon him to tranſmit them to his government.

I preſume, citizen, that this letter will find you at the Hague ; if not, I aſk it may be ſent back to you at Paris.

Salute and fraternity,

(Signed) CH. MAU. TALLEYRAND.

This letter was tranſmitted by Mr. Murray to the American government, and I own I am not acquainted with any words, either in the French or Engliſh language, which could have expreſſed in a more ſolemn, a more explicit, or a more decided manner aſſurances of all that I had demanded as conditions of negociation. How could I get rid of it, with honor, or even without infamy ? If ever there was a regular diplomatic communication, this was one. The diplomatic organs were all perfect and complete. Mr. Pichon was well known at Philadelphia, where he had reſided ſome years in a public employment in the family of the French ambaſſador, as a reſpectable man and a man of letters. He was now Secretary of Legation, held a commiſſion from his ſovereign as much as a miniſter plenipotentiary ; and every ſecretary of legation in the abſence of his principal miniſter, is, of courſe, Charge des affaires ; and the acts of a Charge des affaires are as official, as legal and authentic, as thoſe of an Ambaſſador Extraordinary.

In what other manner could Mr. Talleyrand have tranſmitted the aſſurances demanded ? He had communicated them to Mr. Gerry, but was deſirous of ſending them by another way, that he might increaſe the chances of their arrival. At war with England, he could not ſend them to Mr. King. If he had ſent them to Madrid to Col. Humphreys, there was no probability of their arriving in America ſo ſoon as through Holland. If he had ſent them to Berlin, to Mr. Adams, the courſe would have been ſtill more circuitous and the probability much greater of long delay and uncertain arrival. If he had ſent them to Mr. Smith, at Liſbon, there would have

been the ſame difficulties. Of all the diplomatic organs, therefore in Europe, he choſe the beſt, the ſhorteſt, the ſafeſt and the moſt certain.

Mr. Gerry's Letter to the Secretary of State, dated Nantaſket Road, October the 1ſt, 1798, confirmed theſe aſſurances beyond all doubt, in my mind, and his converſations with me, at my own houſe, in Quincy, if any thing further had been wanting, would have corroborated the whole. As I have not a copy of that gentleman's letter, if he ſhould chance to read this paper, I aſk the favor of him to publiſh copies of his letter and of Mr. Talleyrand's letters to him, and, if he pleaſes, to repeat the aſſurances he gave me in converſation. This gentleman's merit in this tranſaction was very great. They have been treated like all his other ſacrifices, ſervices and ſufferings in the cauſe of his country.

If, with all this information, I had refuſed to inſtitute a negociation or had not perſevered in it, after it was inſtituted, I ſhould have been degraded in my own eſtimation as a man of honor ; I ſhould have diſgraced the nation I repreſented, in their own opinion and in the judgment of all Europe.

JOHN ADAMS.

Quincy, April, 1809.

To Meſſrs. Everett & Munroe, Editors of the Boſton Patriot.

GENTLEMEN,

HIS excellency, Mr. Adams, late Preſident of the United States, having expreſſed in the *Boſton Patriot* of yeſterday, a deſire that I would publiſh copies of my letter to the Secretary of State, dated *Nantaſket Road, October* 1, 1798, and of the letters of M. Talleyrand to myſelf, together with his aſſurances, communicated by me to the Preſident, in converſation; in compliance with the Preſident's requeſt, I now ſend you the copies referred to,

and ſhall tranſmit the " aſſurances" in time for publication. Your obt. ſer'vt.

E. GERRY.

Cambridge, 27th April, 1809.

Extracts from the Letter of Mr. Gerry to Timothy Pickering, Eſq. Secretary of State, dated Nantaſket Roads, 1ſt October, 1798.

When I left the United States in Auguſt, 1797, the citizens in general appeared to be earneſtly deſirous of a reconciliation with France, on terms conſiſtent with the honor, intereſt and welfare of the two republics; theſe, being free from claims and controverſies in regard to territory, boundaries, and many matters which embroil ſtates; and from competitions relative to their productions, manufactures, and commerce, had a mutual and manifeſt intereſt in the renewal of their commercial and friendly intercourſe with each other. Nature ſeemed to have entitled the United States, in their remote ſituation to the peaceable purſuit of their induſtry, by means whereof, in its various branches, their wealth and power were rapidly increaſing; and to an exemption from the conflicts of Europe; which, involving them, would check their population, drain their reſources, and enſure their poverty. On a candid inveſtigation then of the cauſes of the unhappy differences between the two governments, on a diſpoſition to correct errors, to which all governments are more or leſs liable, and on their mutual reſolution to reciprocate juſtice, the ſucceſs of the miſſion was conceived to depend; and as this temper marked the plan of pacification adopted by the government of the United States, there was a rational proſpect of ſucceſs.

On the 26th of July, I left Paris; and from the beſt information which I could obtain relative to the diſpoſition of the Executive Directory (for I never had any direct communication with them) they were very deſirous of a reconciliation between the republics. Every impediment to my departure had been adopted by the French Miniſter; and he would have prevented it, had he ſucceeded in his plan

of an epiſtolary diſcuſſion; his object was, as I conceived, to gain time for aſcertaining, whether the United States were then diſpoſed to a treaty; of this he manifeſted doubts, being perſuaded that their reſentment was too great to admit of it. He ſeemed alſo to apprehend, that in conſequence of the incredible exertions of Great Britain, and the unequivocal evidence ſhe had given of her ability to defend herſelf, they were inclined to avenge their injuries, by an alliance with her: and that ſhould France come forward with overtures, or the plan of a treaty, ſhe would fail therein, and compromit her honor. I was nevertheleſs of opinion, that ſhould France be juſt and liberal in her meaſures, the government of the United States would ſtill meet her on the ground of accommodation. My judgment was the reſult of their inſtructions; for I had never received any other official intelligence ſince my departure from America: I have, therefore, uniformly inculcated that ſentiment.

Having been thus in a ſituation, wherein, amidſt a ſeries of events, each has been productive of freſh embarraſſments, I have invariably purſued what to me appeared the honor, intereſt and welfare of my country, and been guided by the ſenſe of the government, as far as I could aſcertain it.

If the door is ſtill open to peace, the eſtabliſhment of it muſt be an happy event to the United States, as it will exempt them from calamities, which, notwithſtanding deluſive appearances, will with ſhort intervals probably continue for half a century, to exhauſt and depopulate Europe.

Extract from the letter of Ch. Mau. Talleyrand, to Mr. Gerry, Envoy of the United States, dated Paris, July 22, 1798.

You repeat to me that the government of the United States has always been diſpoſed to terminate amicably the differences which ſubſiſt between the two republics. This freſh aſſurance, at a time when hoſtile demonſtrations have juſt been made, could not but temper their effect.

But let a frank, candid, and truly amicable act ſpeedily realize thoſe diſpoſitions. Far from entering into the anſwers of the Preſident to the addreſſes which have been preſented to him from different parts of the United States, whatſoever they may be, I would fain behold in his expreſſions nothing but a political expedient. I do not thence judge leſs favorably of the true intentions, which you profeſs in his name, and I would not have engaged you to warrant the ſucceſs of the firſt proof, which he will render of them, if the Executive Directory, which was ready to receive you, had not made a fixed determination upon the ſubject. A negotiation may therefore be reſumed even at Paris, where I flatter myſelf you have obſerved nothing but teſtimonies of eſteem, and where every Envoy who ſhall unite your advantages cannot fail to be well received.—Moreover, I know not, ſir, why you tell me that it would be requiſite to lop from this negociation every preliminary reſpecting a loan, and explanations on the ſubject of the ſpeeches delivered. Be pleaſed to read over again the propoſitions which I tranſmitted to you on the 30th Prairial, [June 18,] they contain all the ideas of the French government; and you will not find in them a word which juſtifies your recurring to thoſe two queſtions. An odious intrigue had got poſſeſſion of them: the dignity of the French government could not permit this mixture; and it did not wiſh that views as pure as its own ſhould be aſſociated therewith hereafter. As to the preliminary meaſures, which you ſuggeſt, ſir, the government has already anticipated your deſire. By information which it has juſt received, it indeed learns that violences have been committed upon the commerce and citizens of the United States in the Weſt Indies, and on their coaſts. Do it the juſtice to believe, that it needs only to know the facts, to diſavow all acts contrary to the laws of the Republic and its own decrees. A remedy is preparing for it, and orders will ſoon arrive in the Weſt Indies, calculated to cauſe every thing to return within its juſt limits, until an amicable arrangement between France

and the United States, ſhall re-eſtabliſh them reſpectively in the enjoyment of their treaties.

To Mr. Gerry, Envoy of the United States.

Preſuming, Sir, that you have not yet embarked, I addreſs to you a decree of the Executive Directory, wherein you will find a part of the meaſures, which I announced to you the fourth of this month. Its ſolicitude will not be confined to that. Neutrals in general, will have reaſon ſoon to be convinced of its firm attachment to the principles to which it is deſirous that all the maritime nations might agree. It depends upon the United States in particular, to cauſe every miſunderſtanding immediately to diſappear between them and the French Republic.

Accept, Sir, the aſſurance of my perfect conſideration.

(Signed) CH. MAU. TALLEYRAND.

Extract from a memorandum containing the ſubſtance of a conference with the Dutch Miniſter, the 25th July, 1798.

Juſt before dinner, the Dutch Miniſter called on me, and ſaid, he had received from Mr. Talleyrand, a printed copy of his letter to me, dated 24th Meſſidor (12th July) that the Dutch government took a friendly part in the diſputes between France and the United States, and that he came to offer his ſervices, and the mediation of his government, who had authorized and inſtructed him on this head.

I anſwered, that the conduct of Mr. Talleyrand, in publiſhing his letter to me, had an hoſtile appearance: that if a mediation could be ſuppoſed neceſſary, it muſt be offered to the government of the United States: I had no authority to accept it: that if the government of France was ſincere in its declaration, made through Mr. Talleyrand, its Miniſter, all that was wanting was to open a negociation; for he had expreſſed a deſire to ſhow by treaty how well diſpoſed France was to put an end to theſe diſputes; that the government of the United States was ſo reaſonable, and juſt in its demands, that it could not fail to evince a good diſpoſition to a reconciliation, that

the etiquette of ſetting on foot a negociation appeared at preſent to be the only embarraſſment; more especially as the principal obſtruction to a negociation had ceaſed, this government having relinquiſhed all claims of loans and reparations on account of the Preſident's ſpeeches.

Further Communications from the Honorable E. GERRY.

The "aſſurances" to which Preſident Adams has referred, as having been imparted to him in converſation, by Mr. Gerry, are preſumed by the latter to have reference to thoſe which the French Directory made to him by their miniſter, Mr. Talleyrand, and by confidential perſons, after the departure of the other envoys. They were expreſſed in the ſtrongeſt terms, to evince the diſpoſition of the Directory, for accommodating all ſubjects of difference between the two republics; for accrediting any miniſter or miniſters which ſhould thereafter have been ſent by the U. States, immediately on the preſentment of their letters of credence; for adopting a commercial treaty that ſhould be liberal and beneficial to the ſaid States; and for making effectual arrangements to diſcharge the numerous and juſt demands of American citizens, on the French republic. Indeed, the "aſſurances" were ſuch, as that any departure from them, muſt have forfeited any ſubſequent claim of credit on the part of the French republic.

Meſſrs. *Everett & Munroe*,

Gentlemen—In Mr. GERRY's Letter to Mr. *Pickering*, extracts of which were publiſhed in the *Boſton Patriot* of the 3d of this month, was the following concluding paragraph—viz. "*I ſhall probably when at leiſure give you ſome other details.*" Accordingly, on the 21ſt of November following, Mr. *Gerry* encloſed to Mr. *Pickering* documents,

numbered from 36 to 50 inclusively, and observed, that "the number first mentioned, contains a *proposition* which "I made to my colleagues, as an answer to the communications of X, & Y, of the 19th and 20th of Oct. At "the bottom of the original, is the following note, in the "hand writing of one of the Envoys, namely—'*Intended* "*to be given Saturday the 21st of October ;*' which I think "manifests their disposition, and is certainly an unequivocal evidence of my own, to have put an early period "to these delusive measures."

The following is the *proposition* alluded to, and it never was before published : but President *Adams* declared to Mr. *Gerry*, that it was a complete justification of his conduct on that embassy.

"To the question, Whether the propositions informally, and confidentially communicated to us, *as private citizens*, at the request, as is stated, of Mr. TALLEYRAND in his *private capacity*, will be adopted as the basis of a treaty ? this answer is given : That it is highly probable some of the propositions communicated on the evenings of the 19th and 20th of October, (being the 28th and 29th Vendemaire) will be considered as the basis of the project of a treaty, and *others*, *as inadmissible ;* but that it is impossible to discuss them, or to come to a decision on them, until they are presented to us, in our official characters."

LETTER IV.

WHEN I had received that authentic act of the sovereign authority of France, a copy of which is inserted in my last letter to you, communicated by their Secretary of State, through their Secretary of Legation and Charge des Affaires and our Minister at the Hague, fully complying with all my requisitions, upon mature deliberation I determined to nominate a Minister to France. Some of the communications from France had been accompanied with intimations concerning the characters proper to be

employed, which I thought exceptionable, and that they might be made a pretext for again rejecting a minister. I considered moreover, that France was an undulating ocean in a violent storm; party had exterminated party, and constitution had succeeded constitution, as billow rolls and roars, froths and foams after billow in the Gulph Stream. I knew, that in the nature of things, an executive authority in five persons could not last long in France or any where else: and we were already informed that the Directory was divided into parties, three against two, and that the majority in the Legislative Assembly adhered to the two, and the minority to the three. A revolution then was to be expected, and the new government might not feel themselves bound by the assurances given by their predecessors. To avoid the possibility of these inconveniences, I provided as cautiously and effectually against them as I could, in my message to the Senate, which never has been published. If this message had been made public, with its contents, the public despatch from France, I have confidence enough in the candor of the nation, to believe that it would have obviated many a silly and many a malicious criticism. It was in these words.

Gentlemen of the Senate,

I transmit to you a document which seems to be intended to be a compliance with a condition mentioned at the conclusion of my message to Congress, of the 21st of June last. Always disposed and ready to embrace every plausible appearance of probability of preserving or restoring tranquility, I nominate William Vans Murray, our Minister Resident at the Hague, to be Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States to the French Republic. If the Senate shall advise and consent to his appointment, effectual care shall be taken in his instructions, that he shall not go to France without direct and unequivocal assurances from the French government, signified by their minister of foreign relations, that he shall be received in character; shall enjoy the privileges attached to his character by the law of nations, and that a minister of equal

rank, title and powers ſhall be appointed to treat with him, to diſcuſs and conclude all controverſies between the two republics, by a new treaty. JOHN ADAMS.

Feb. 18, 1799.

In this manner effectual proviſion was made againſt any and every poſſible inſidious uſe, of the inſinuations concerning characters proper to be employed, and who would be likely to ſucceed. In this manner alſo, proviſion was made againſt the poſſible and indeed highly probable and fully expected revolution in the French government. Mr. Murray was not to advance a ſtep towards Paris from the Hague, until after he ſhould have received from the French government, whatever it might be, a repetition of aſſurances, officially communicated, that he in perſon ſhould be received.

When this meſſage was received in the Senate, it was poſtponed, as the greateſt part of executive buſineſs uſually was, for conſideration. A great clamor was raiſed among the members of the Houſe of repreſentatives and out of doors, and an abundance of ſquibs, ſcoffs and ſarcaſms in what were then called the federal newſpapers, particularly Cobbett's Porcupine and John Ward Fenno's United States Gazette. And by whom were theſe written? As I was informed, by Macdonald, the Scottiſh Britiſh commiſſioner for adjuſting the claims of Britiſh creditors, and by William Smith, the Britiſh agent for claimants before that board of commiſſioners, of whom Macdonald was one. There were other writers beſides theſe; but I will not condeſcend to name any others at preſent. It was given out that John Ward Fenno was the writer of the moſt important of them, and he was repreſented as a maſterly writer, poſſeſſed of a moſt eloquent pen. *But the pen was not his.*

This was not all. Something much more ſerious to me ſoon took place. A committee of the Senate called upon me, whether appointed on record, or whether by private concert, I know not. I was diſtreſſed, becauſe I thought the procedure unconſtitutional. However, I was determined that not one diſreſpectful word ſhould eſcape

me concerning the Senate or any member of it, and to that reſolution I carefully adhered; and in relating the conference with thoſe honorable gentlemen, which ſhall appear in my next letter, the ſame decorum ſhall be obſerved.

JOHN ADAMS.

Quincy, April 22, 1809.

LETTER V.

THE gentlemen of the Senate informed me, that they came to confer with me on the ſubject of the nomination of Mr. Murray to France; that there was a conſiderable diſſatisfaction with it, and they deſired to know for what reaſons I had preferred Mr. Murray to ſo many others abroad and at home. My anſwer to the gentlemen was, that I thought Mr. Murray a gentleman of talents, addreſs and literature, as well as of great worth and honor, every way well qualified for the ſervice, and fully adequate to all that I ſhould require of him, which would be a ſtrict compliance with his inſtructions, which I ſhould take care to provide for him on all points in terms that he could not miſunderſtand. That my motives for nominating him in preference to others, were ſimply becauſe the invitation from the French government had been tranſmitted through him, and becauſe he was ſo near to Paris, that he might be there in three or four days, and becauſe his appointment would cauſe a very trifling additional expenſe.

They then enquired why I had not nominated Mr. King? I anſwered that if Mr. King had been in Holland, I certainly ſhould not have thought of any other character. But he was our Ambaſſador in England, then at war with France, and it would be conſidered by France as an inſult, to ſend them an Ambaſſador, who, as ſoon as he had accompliſhed his buſineſs, was to return to England and carry with him all the information he might have collected in Paris. That the French government would ſuſpect me of a deſign to ſend them a ſpy for the Court of St.

James'. That I presumed Mr. King at that time would not be pleased to be removed from England to France, for perpetuity or permanence. Besides, that the difficulty of communication between England and France, would necessarily occasion an indefinite delay in procuring the necessary passports, and that much depended upon the promptitude and despatch with which the negociation should be conducted.

The gentlemen asked why I had not nominated our minister plenipotentiary at Berlin?—Neither the remarks with which they accompanied this question, nor the reasons which I gave them in answer, need to be detailed to the public.

I added, gentlemen, I maturely considered all these things before I nominated Mr. Murray; and I considered another gentleman, whom you have not mentioned, Mr. Humphries, at Madrid: but the same objections of distance and delay account in his case as well as that of Mr. Adams. The gentlemen all agreed that there would have been no advantage in nominating him more than Mr. Murray.

The gentlemen then inquired why I had not nominated a commission of three or five in preference to a single gentleman. The answer was that I had a long experience of ten years in this kind of business, and had often acted in commissions with various other gentlemen, and I had three times been commissioned alone. That I had found in general that business could be better done by one than by many, in much less time and with much less perplexity. That the business to be done by Mr. Murray would be nothing more than obedience to his instructions, and that would be performed as well by one as by three. That the delay must be great in sending gentlemen from America, and the expense greatly augmented. That very much depended upon the celerity of the enterprize.

The gentlemen thought that a commission would be more satisfactory to the Senate and to the public. I said although this was not perfectly consonant to my own opinion, I could in such a case easily give up my own to

the public, and if they adviſed it, I would ſend another meſſage and nominate a commiſſion of three; but Mr. Murray would be one, for after having brought his name before the public, I never would diſgrace him by leaving him out. The gentlemen acquieſced, and one of them, whom I took to be their chairman, was pleaſed to ſay, "after this very enlightened explanation of the whole buſineſs, I am perfectly ſatisfied." The others appeared to acquieſce, and took their leave. The next morning I ſent another meſſage, which ſhall appear in my next letter.

JOHN ADAMS.

Quincy, April 26, 1809.

LETTER VI.

THE meſſage mentioned in my laſt letter, was in theſe words:

Gentlemen of the Senate,

The propoſition of a freſh negociation with France, in conſequence of advances made by the French government, has excited ſo general an attention and ſo much converſation, as to have given occaſion to many manifeſtations of the public opinion, from which it appears to me, that a new modification of the embaſſy will give more general ſatisfaction to the legiſlature and to the nation, and perhaps better anſwer the purpoſes we have in view.

It is on this ſuppoſition, and with this expectation, that I now nominate Oliver Ellſworth, Eſq. Chief Juſtice of the United States, Patrick Henry, Eſq. late Governor of Virginia, and William Vans Murray, Eſq. our Miniſter Reſident at the Hague, to be Envoys Extraordinary and Miniſters Plenipotentiary to the French Republic, with full powers to diſcuſs and ſettle by a treaty all controverſies between the United States and France. It is not intended that the two former of theſe gentlemen ſhall embark for Europe, until they ſhall have received from the Executive Directory aſſurances ſignified by their Secretary

of foreign relations, that they ſhall be received in character, that they ſhall enjoy all the prerogatives attached to that character by the law of nations, and that a miniſter or miniſters of equal powers ſhall be appointed and commiſſioned to treat with them.

JOHN ADAMS.

Feb. 25, 1799.

To theſe nominations the Senate adviſed and conſented, and commiſſions were prepared. My friend, Mr. Henry, declined on account of his age, and Governor Davie, of North-Carolina, was appointed in his place. During all this tranſaction, no motion was made in the Senate, to paſs a reſolution that a miſſion to France was inexpedient. With the deſpatches from Talleyrand before his eyes, I believe no member of the Senate would have been willing to record his name in favor of ſuch a reſolution, among the yeas and nays. The deputation of Senators made no remonſtrances to me againſt the miſſion, or the diplomatic communications on which it was founded, but only againſt the miſſionary, Mr. Murray.

I ſent an invitation to the heads of departments to aſſemble in my chamber, to conſult upon the inſtructions to be given to our envoys. They all met me accordingly, and in ſeveral long evenings entered into a very ſerious and deliberate diſcuſſion of every article that was to be demanded and inſiſted on in the propoſed treaty. They were all unanimouſly agreed upon to my entire ſatisfaction, and reduced to writing. I committed them to the Secretary of ſtate, to be reduced into proper form, to have a fair copy made and tranſmitted to me, for reviſion, correction or ſignature, as there might be occaſion.

The yellew fever was expected, and we were all obliged to fly for our lives : myſelf and all my family to Quincy, and the heads of departments, with the public offices, to Trenton.

I had repeatedly endeavored to impreſs upon the mind of the Secretary of ſtate, the neceſſity of tranſmitting to me as ſoon as poſſible, his draught of the inſtructions,

that they might be finiſhed and ſigned, and every thing prepared for the departure of the Envoys. I waited with much concern, expecting from day to day to receive the inſtructions; but no inſtructions appeared. At length, inſtead of them, I received a letter ſigned by all five of the heads of departments, earneſtly entreating me to *ſuſpend the miſſion!*

I was aſtoniſhed at this unexpected, this obſtinate and perſevering oppoſition to a meaſure, that appeared ſo clearly to me to be ſo eſſential to the peace and proſperity of the nation, and the honor of the government, at home and abroad. I was not a little ſurpriſed at the unanimity of the heads of departments, for two of them had always appeared moderate and candid in relation to this miſſion. My inſtantaneous determination was to go to Trenton, meet the gentlemen face to face, to confer with them coolly on the ſubject, and convince them, or be convinced by them, if I could. On my way, I called upon Chief Juſtice Ellſworth, at his ſeat in Windſor, and had a converſation of perhaps two hours with him. He was perfectly candid. Whatever ſhould be the determination, he was ready at an hour's warning to comply. If it was thought beſt to embark immediately, he was ready. If it was judged more expedient to poſtpone it for a little time, though that might ſubject him to a winter voyage, that danger had no weight with him. If it was concluded to defer it till the ſpring, he was willing to wait. In this diſpoſition I took leave of him. He gave me no intimation that he had any thought of a journey to Trenton. I lodged at Hartford, not yet purified of the yellow fever, and there I caught ſomething very like it, or at leaſt almoſt as bad, a moſt violent cold, attended with a conſtant fever, which rendered me for ſix weeks more fit for a chamber and bed of ſickneſs, than for uncomfortable journeys, or much labor of the head or hands. However, I would not conſent to be retarded on my journey, and reached Trenton, where Mr. Hamilton had arrived a few hours before me. Governor Davie had been there ſome time. Ill as I was, I ſent for the heads of departments.

Four of them were there. The attorney general was gone to Virginia. Many days were employed in conferences with them, ſometimes at my own apartments, and ſometimes at their offices.

The inhabitants of Trenton had been wrought up to a pitch of political enthuſiaſm that ſurpriſed me. The univerſal opinion appeared to be, that the firſt arrivals from Europe would bring the glorious news, that Louis the Eighteenth was reſtored to the throne of France, and reigning triumphantly at Verſailles. Suwarrow, at the head of his victorious Ruſſian army, was to have marched from Italy to Paris, on one ſide, and Prince Charles, at the head of an Auſtrian army, was to have marched from Germany to Paris on the other, and detachments from both armies were to march down to Havre, to receive the king, who was to be brought over by a Britiſh fleet and eſcorted with flying colors to Verſailles. I could ſcarcely believe my own ſenſes when I heard ſuch reveries. Yet the heads of departments appeared to believe them, and urge them as deciſive arguments for ſuſpending the embarkation of our envoys till the ſpring. In vain did I urge the immenſe diſtances the two imperial armies had to march, the great number of towns and cities in the route of both, in poſitions choſen with great ſkill, fortified with exquiſite art, defended by vaſt trains of heavy ordnance, garriſoned by numerous troops of ſoldiers perfectly diſciplined, and animated with all the obſtinacy and ardor of the revolutionary spirit. In vain did I alledge the military maxim, which would certainly govern both Prince Charles and Suwarrow, that is, *never to leave a fortified city in the rear of your army, in poſſeſſion of your enemy.* That the ſiege of one town would conſume the whole ſeaſon. That neither the Ruſſians nor Auſtrians were probably provided with the mortars and heavy cannon neceſſary for ſieges. Nothing would do—Louis XVIII. muſt be upon the throne of France.—Well, ſuppoſe he is, what harm will there be in embarking our envoys? They will congratulate his majeſty, and if his majeſty cannot receive them under their credentials to

the French Republic, he will be glad to ſee them in his kingdom, and aſſure them of his royal protection till they can write home for freſh commiſſions, and ſuch ſhall be ready for them at a minute's warning. In vain did I urge the entire change of property in France, and the neceſſity the preſent poſſeſſors were under to defend themſelves at every ſacrifice and every riſque. Mr. Ellſworth had arrived in two or three days after me. I invited him and Governor Davie to dine with me alone, that we might converſe with entire freedom. At table, Mr. Ellſworth expreſſed an opinion ſomewhat ſimilar to that of the heads of departments and the public opinion of Trenton. Is it poſſible, Chief Juſtice, ſaid I, that you can ſeriouſly believe that the Bourbons are or will be ſoon reſtored to the throne of France? Why, ſaid Mr. Ellſworth, ſmiling, *it looks a good deal ſo.* I ſhould not be afraid to ſtake my life upon it, that they will not be reſtored in ſeven years, if they ever are, was my reply. And then I entered into a long detail of my reaſons for this opinion. They would be too tedious to enumerate here, and time has ſuperceded the neceſſity of them.

The reſult of the converſation was, that Mr. Davie was decidedly for embarking immediately, as he always had been from his firſt arrival, and Mr. Ellſworth declared himſelf ſatisfied and willing to embark as ſoon as I pleaſed.

Mr. Hamilton, who had been ſome time in town and had viſited me ſeveral times, came at laſt to remonſtrate againſt the miſſion to France. I received him with great civility, as I always had done from my firſt knowledge of him. I was fortunately in a very happy temper and very good humor. He went over the whole ground of the victories of Suwarrow and Prince Charles, and the inflexible determination of the two imperial courts, in concert with Great Britain, to reſtore the houſe of Bourbon to their kingdom. That there was no doubt the enterpriſe was already accompliſhed, or at leaſt it would be, before the end of the campaign. That Mr. Pitt was determined to reſtore the Bourbons. That the confidence of the

nation in Mr. Pitt was unbounded. That the nation was never ſo united, and determined to ſupport Mr. Pitt and his reſolution to reſtore the monarchy of France. His eloquence and vehemence wrought the little man up to a degree of heat and effervescence like that which General Knox uſed to deſcribe of his conduct in the battle of Monmouth, and which General Lee uſed to call his *paroxyſms* of bravery, but which he ſaid would never be of any ſervice to his country. I anſwered him in general, as I had anſwered the heads of departments and Judge Ellſworth —but to no purpoſe. He repeated over and over again the unalterable reſolution of Mr. Pitt and the two imperial courts, the invincible heroiſm of Suwarrow and Prince Charles, and the unbounded confidence of the Britiſh empire in Mr. Pitt, with ſuch agitation and violent action, that I really pitied him, inſtead of being diſpleaſed. I only added, that I differed with him in opinion on every point, and that inſtead of reſtoring the Bourbons, it would not be long before England would make peace. I treated him throughout with great mildneſs and civility; but after he took leave, I could not help reflecting in my own mind on the total ignorance he had betrayed of every thing in Europe, in France, England, and elſewhere. Inſtead of that unbounded confidence in Mr. Pitt, I knew that the nation had been long working up almoſt to a ripeneſs for rebellion againſt Mr. Pitt, for continuing the war. Accordingly it was not long before Mr. Pitt was obliged to reſign, peace at Amiens was made, and Napoleon acknowledged. Mr. Hamilton in his moſt famous pamphlet, has hinted at this converſation, and ſquinted at my ſimplicity for expecting peace.

Under the whole, I directed the inſtructions to be prepared, the heads of departments were aſſembled, and the inſtructions deliberately conſidered, paragraph by paragraph, and unanimouſly approved by me and by them. Indeed there had never been any difference of opinion among us on any article of the inſtructions.

The inſtructions were preſented to the envoys, and they requeſted to embark in the United States frigate as

ſoon as poſſible. For ſome cauſe or other in the ſtate of the ſhip, they landed in Spain, and went by land from Corunna to Paris on the ſame route which Mr. Dana and I had travelled twenty years before, that is, in 1780. Before their arrival, a revolution had occurred, and the Conſular government ſucceeded the Directory.

Had Mr. Murray's nomination been approved, he would probably have finiſhed the buſineſs long before, and obtained compenſation for all ſpoliations.

JOHN ADAMS.

Quincy, May 2, 1809.

LETTER VII.

ON the 6th of March a letter was written by the Secretary of State by my order, in the following words, to Mr. MURRAY:

Philadelphia, March 6, 1799.

SIR,

I encloſe a commiſſion conſtituting you, in conjunction with the Chief Juſtice *Ellſworth* and *Patrick Henry*, Eſq. of Virginia, Envoys Extraordinary and Miniſters Plenipotentiary to the French Republic. By the Preſident's direction, I encloſe for your information, copies of his Meſſages to the Senate of the 18th and 28th of March; (it ſhould have been the 18th and 25th of February) by the latter of which you will ſee the motives inducing the nomination of a commiſſion for the purpoſe of negociating with France, inſtead of reſting the buſineſs wholly with you. This will doubtleſs be agreeable, by relieving you from the weight of a ſole reſponſibility in an affair of ſuch magnitude.

It is the Preſident's deſire, that you by letter to the French Miniſter of foreign relations, inform him "that "*Oliver Ellſworth*, Chief Juſtice of the United States, "*Patrick Henry*, late Governor of Virginia, and yourſelf, "are appointed Envoys Extraordinary and Miniſters Ple-

" nipotentiary of the United States to the French Repub-
" lic, with full powers to diſcuſs and ſettle by a Treaty,
" all controverſies between the United States and France."
But, " that the two former will not embark for Europe
" until they ſhall have received from the Executive Direc-
" tory direct and unequivocal aſſurances, ſignified by
" their Secretary of foreign relations, that the Envoys
" ſhall be received in character, to an audience of the
" Directory, and that they ſhall enjoy all the prerogatives
" attached to that character by the law of nations, and
" that a Miniſter or Miniſters of equal powers ſhall be
" appointed and commiſſioned to treat with them."

The anſwer you ſhall receive to your letter, you will be pleaſed to tranſmit to this office.

You will alſo be pleaſed to underſtand it to be the Preſident's opinion, that no more indirect and inofficial communications, written or verbal, ſhould be held with any perſons whatever, agents on behalf of France, on the ſubjects of difference between the United States and the French Republic. If the French government really deſire a ſettlement of the exiſting differences, it muſt take the courſe pointed out: unleſs the Executive Directory ſhould prefer ſending a Miniſter Plenipotentiary to the United States.

I have the honor to be, very reſpectfully, ſir, your obedient ſervant,

TIMOTHY PICKERING.

Wm. Vans Murray, Eſq.
Miniſter of the U. States
at the Hague.

Mr. Murray obeyed theſe inſtructions by a letter in theſe words:—

The Hague, 5th May, 1799.

Citizen Minister,

It is with the greateſt pleaſure that I haſten to fulfil the inſtructions, which I have juſt had the honor to receive from the government of the United States of America, by informing you that the Preſident has appointed *Oliver*

Ellſworth, Chief Juſtice of the United States, *Patrick Henry*, late Governor of Virginia, and *William Vans Murray*, Miniſter reſident of the United States at the Hague, to be Envoys Extraordinary and Miniſters Plenipotentiary of the United States to the French Republic, with full powers to diſcuſs and ſettle by a Treaty, all controverſies between the United States and France ; but that the two former, Mr. Ellſworth and Mr. Henry will not embark for Europe until they ſhall have received from the Executive Directory, direct and unequivocal aſſurances, ſignified by their Miniſter of foreign relations, that the Envoys ſhall be received in character, to an audience of the Directory, and that they ſhall enjoy all the prerogatives attached to that character by the law of nations, and that a Miniſter or Miniſters of equal powers ſhall be appointed and commiſſioned to treat with them.

I requeſt you, citizen miniſter, to lay this ſubject before your government, and as the diſtance is ſo great, and the obſtacles ſo numerous in an Atlantic voyage, that you will favor me, as ſpeedily as poſſible, with the anſwer which is to lead to ſuch happy and important conſequences.

Accept, Citizen Miniſter, the aſſurances of my perfect high eſteem.

(Signed) WM. V. MURRAY.

To the Citizen TALLEYRAND, *Miniſter of the Exterior Relations of the French Republic, &c. &c. Paris.*

When Mr. Murray received the anſwer of the French Miniſter, he incloſed it, with the following letter from himſelf, to the Secretary of State :—

The Hague, 7th of May, 1799.

DEAR SIR,

On the 4th inſt. late in the evening, I had the honor to receive your No. 22, containing the commiſſion of envoys.

On the fifth I addreſſed, preciſely, agreeably to your inſtructions, as I conceived, the incloſed letter to Mr. Talleyrand, the Miniſter of exterior relations. You will

perceive, ſir, that I did not think myſelf at liberty to go, not only not out of the commas, but beyond them. In one word alone I deviated, in the word miniſter, inſtead of ſecretary of foreign relations. No direct nor indirect and inofficial communications, written or verbal, will be held by me with the French agents on American affairs.

I accept the appointment which it has pleaſed the Preſident to clothe me with, under a grateful ſenſe of the high honor conferred upon me, ſo unexpectedly, by this mark of his confidence. I may be allowed to ſay, that though I was deeply ſenſible of the honor conferred by the firſt nomination, and ſhall always, I hope, retain a moſt grateful recollection of it; yet, ſir, the new modification of that nomination gave me great pleaſure, always conceiving as I thought I did, that any negociation with France would be full of anxieties and political perils to the envoys that ſhould be employed by our government. I had no wiſhes to be engaged in it, and no expectation that I ſhould be: To have a ſhare in it was by me unſought: You will excuſe this declaration, becauſe I was inſtrumental in certain preliminary ſteps relative *to the advances of France which produced the baſis of the appointment.*

I ſent the original of the incloſed to Mr. *Talleyrand*, by poſt; another, a copy, to Maj. *Montflorence*, to be handed to him; a third to a Mr. *Griffith* for Maj. M. in caſe the other failed, to be opened by Mr. G. if Maj. M. ſhould have been out of Paris, and directed Mr. G. to follow the inſtructions which he would find in the letter to Maj. M. which were to deliver the incloſed to Mr. *Talleyrand*, and take his letter in anſwer for me, and ſend it to me.

As ſoon as I have the anſwer of the Directory, I ſhall have the honor of tranſmitting copies to you, ſir, by different ways.

I am, with the greateſt reſpect, and ſincere eſteem, dear ſir, faithfully your moſt obedient ſervant,

WILLIAM V. MURRAY.

The Hon. Timothy Pickering,
Eſq. Sec'ry of State, of the U.
States of America.

PARIS, 23d Floreal, (12th May 1799)
7th year of the French Republic, one
and indiviſſible.

The Miniſter of Exterior Relations,
To Mr. WM. VANS MURRAY, Miniſter reſident of the
U. States at the Hague.

I augur too well, ſir, from the eagerneſs you diſplay, in fulfilling the inſtructions of your government, not to haſten to anſwer the letter I received from you, dated the 15th of this month.

The Executive Directory being informed of the nomination of Mr. *Oliver Ellſworth*, of Mr. *Patrick Henry*, and of yourſelf, as Envoys Extraordinary and Miniſters Plenipotentiary of the United States to the French Republic, to diſcuſs and terminate all differences which ſubſiſt between the two countries, ſees with pleaſure, that its perſeverance in pacific ſentiments has kept open the way to an approaching reconciliation. It has a long time ago manifeſted its intentions with reſpect to this ſubject. Be pleaſed to tranſmit to your colleagues, and accept yourſelf, the frank and explicit aſſurance, that it will receive the Envoys of the United States, in the official character with which they are inveſted: that they ſhall enjoy all the prerogatives which are attached to them by the law of nations, and that one or more Miniſters ſhall be authoriſed to treat with them.

It was certainly unneceſſary to ſuffer ſo many months to elapſe for the mere confirmation of what I have already declared to Mr. *Gerry*, and which, after his departure, I cauſed to be declared to you at the Hague. I ſincerely regret that your two colleagues await this anſwer at ſuch a diſtance. As to you, ſir, whom it will reach in a few days, and who underſtand ſo well the value of time, when the reſtoration of harmony between two republics which every thing invites to friendſhip, is in queſtion, be aſſured that as ſoon as you can take in hand the object of your miſſion, I ſhall have the honor immediately to ſend you paſſports.

Accept, ſir, the aſſurances of my very ſincere conſideration.

(Signed) CH. MAU. TALLEYRAND.

The foregoing documents were not publiſhed till they were communicated to Congreſs with my Meſſage of December 5th, 1799. The Meſſages to the Senate nominating the Miniſter and the Envoys were never publiſhed till now, as I remember. I may be, however, miſtaken. Theſe papers were not publiſhed till the miſchief was done that they might have prevented, and innumerable prejudices and errors propagated all over the nation.

I have omitted two facts which ought to have been inſerted in a former letter :

I. One is, that one of the heads of departments at Trenton was more diffident than the reſt. He ſaid he was far from being ſanguine. He had ſigned the letter to me, urging a poſtponement of the miſſion, becauſe he did not like to be ſingular ; but he wiſhed me to decide the queſtion according to my own judgment and ſentiments. He alſo ſhewed me a letter from the Attorney-General in Virginia, ſaying that the people expected that the Envoys ſhould proceed, and would be diſappointed if they did not.

II. Another fact is that I tranſiently aſked one of the heads of departments, whether *Ellſworth* and *Hamilton* came all the way from Windſor and Newark to Trenton, to convince me that I ought to ſuſpend the miſſion ?

JOHN ADAMS.

Quincy, May 10, 1809.

CORRESPONDENCE

OF THE

LATE PRESIDENT ADAMS.

No.—2.

LETTER VIII.

AT firſt I intended to encumber your paper with no documents but ſuch as were abſolutely neceſſary for my own vindication. But as the peace with France in 1800 was not only an event of great importance in itſelf, but produced demonſtrations of the prejudices, paſſions, views, deſigns and ſyſtems of parties, more perhaps than any other; I hope you will allow me room for ſuch other papers as may ſerve to throw light upon this ſubject. At preſent it may not be very intereſting, but the cauſe of truth and juſtice may hereafter be promoted by having the facts and evidences laid together in a ſeries. The future policy of the nation will not be injured by it.

Beſides the communications already publiſhed from the ſovereign of the French nation, through their Miniſter of foreign relations, their diplomatic organ at the Hague, and our Miniſter there, another was communicated through the ſame channels in theſe words :—

Copy of a letter dated PARIS, *11th Fructidor, 6th year, (Auguſt* 28, 1798*) from Mr.* TALLEYRAND, *as Miniſter of Exterior Relations, to Mr.* PICHON, *Secretary of Legation, Hague.*

TRANSLATION.

I ſee with pleaſure, citizen, that the intercourſe of ſociety has procured you ſome political converſations with

Mr. MURRAY. I entertain an eſteem for that Miniſter. Like all the men at the head of the affairs of the United States, he has received the impreſſions which the Britiſh Cabinet has known how to give, againſt us. He thinks the meaſures of his government juſt and ſupports them: but he poſſeſſes reaſon, underſtanding, and a true attachment to his country: he is neither French nor Engliſh: he is ingenuouſly an American. I am not at all ſurpriſed that he has appeared to you to wiſh ſincerely for the reconciliation of the two Republics. I will, therefore, cheerfully answer the queſtions you put to me, on different points, which appeared to you, not to be well eſtabliſhed in his mind. I do not ſee, between France and the United States any claſhing of intereſt, any cauſe of jealouſy. The Americans wiſh to be fiſhermen, ſailors, manufacturers, and eſpecially huſbandmen. In all theſe points of view, their ſucceſs is more at the expenſe of England than us. Why ſhould we be uneaſy about them? They aſpire to the conſolidation of their national exiſtence, and it is to our purpoſe that they ſhould ſucceed. In fact, we ſhould have decided upon very ſuperficial views, to ſuſtain their independence, if the matter was to ſeparate them from England, merely to leave them finally inſulated among themſelves, on an extenſive ſea coaſt, weak, rivalling, and impoveriſhed by each other, and torn by foreign intrigues. We know that Great Britain would ſoon have put together, piece by piece thoſe ſcattered ſhreds, and we ſhould have done nothing uſeful for ourſelves, if ſo miſerable a chance of it, were not daily rendered more remote.

What, therefore, is the cauſe of the miſunderſtanding, which, if France did not manifeſt herſelf more wiſe, would henceforth induce a violent rupture between the two Republics? Neither incompatible intereſts, nor projects of aggrandizement divide them. After all, diſtruſt alone has done the whole. The government of the United States has thought, that France wanted to revolutionize it. France has thought that the government of the United States wanted to throw itſelf into the arms of England.

It does not require much ſkill to divine, which is the Cabinet intereſted in the two events producing each other, and which inviſibly puts in motion all the expedients calculated to make them take effect. Let us open our eyes on both ſides. I am diſpoſed to admit that the conduct of the government of the United States may be explained by other cauſes than thoſe heretofore preſumed. But let it on its part, underſtand, that the French government, wounded as it may be, is too wiſe to entertain the views of diſturbance, which the other ſuppoſes. It concerns a Republic, founded on the ſyſtem of repreſentation, to ſupport and not to weaken ſimilar eſtabliſhments. The ſtability of this ſyſtem abroad is a neceſſary example at home. France in fine, has a double motive as a nation and as a republic, not to expoſe to any hazard, the preſent exiſtence of the United States. Therefore it never thought of making war againſt them, nor exciting civil commotions among them, and every contrary ſuppoſition is an inſult to common ſenſe.

Theſe fundamental principles being eſtabliſhed, it is natural to aſk by what fatality, a good underſtanding was not long ſince reſtored? It was becauſe irritation being mingled with diſtruſt, neither party yielded to real conciliatory inclinations. In the United States it was ſuppoſed that the French government was temporizing, in order to ſtrike the blow with greater certainty; whence reſulted a crowd of meaſures, more and more aggravating. In France it was ſuppoſed that the government of the United States, wiſhed only the appearances of a negociation, whence reſulted *a certain demand for pledges of good faith.*

Let us ſubſtitute calmneſs for paſſion, confidence for ſuſpicions, and we ſhall ſoon agree. I uſed my endeavors to enter upon a negociation in this ſpirit, with Mr. Gerry. My correſpondence with him, until the day of his departure, is a curious monument of advances on my part, and of evaſions on his. It is wrong to think that I confined myſelf to vague proteſtations. Among that ſeries of official letters, which will doubtleſs be publiſhed at Philadelphia, I ſelect one of the 30th Prairial, wherein

you will see that I make very positive propositions, without any mixture of preliminary conditions. This letter was followed by three notes upon the articles to be discussed, and I intended to complete the others in this manner, if Mr. Gerry had not refused to answer thereto.

When it became necessary to abandon the idea of treating with that envoy, who thought it important only to know how a negociation might thereafter be resumed, I gave him the most solemn assurances concerning the reception that a new plenipotentiary would receive. It was far from my thoughts to insinuate that the President should send one from the United States, instead of investing with his powers some one who was in Europe; far less that the envoy should land directly in France, instead of announcing it in a neighboring country. I wished merely to say that the Executive Directory was so decided for a reconciliation, that all tampering would be superfluous, that an act of confidence in it, would excite its own. I should be very badly understood, if there should be found in my expressions, a restriction on the nature of the choice which the President might make. I wished to encourage Mr. Gerry by testimonies of regard, that his good intentions merited. Although I could not dissemble that he wanted decision at a moment when he might have easily adjusted every thing. It does not thence follow that I designated him: I will even avow that I think him too irresolute to be fit to hasten the conclusion of an affair of this kind. The advantages that I prized in him are common to all Americans, who have not manifested a predilection for England. Can it be believed that a man who should profess a hatred or contempt of the French Republic, or should manifest himself the advocate of royalty, can inspire the Directory with a favorable opinion of the dispositions of the government of the United States? I should have disguised the truth, if I had left this matter ambiguous: it is not to wound the independence of that government, to point out to a sincere friend of peace, the shoals he ought to avoid.

As to the mediation of the Batavian Republic and of Spain, I do not know that there is any ſerious queſtion about it, and it appears to me abſolutely uſeleſs. The United States might heſitate, in the preſent ſtate of things, to refer themſelves to their impartiality, and beſides I ſee no ſubject which may not be arranged directly.

I know that the diſtance which ſeparates France and the United States opens a vaſt field for incident, and there have been but too many of them. But the Executive Directory is unſhaken in the conduct which may beſt obviate them. The exceſs even of provocations has deadened their effect. The government of the United States ſurrounds itſelf with precautions againſt an imaginary attack. To ſtretch the hand to deluded friends, is what one republic owes to another, and I cannot doubt that the dignity of that attitude will convince the Preſident of our pacific diſpoſitions.

The two governments ought above all to be attentive to indirect attempts to alienate them ſtill more. Their prudence will ſecure this object, and I ſhall cite but one example of it. You have told Mr. Murray the truth reſpecting Dr. *Logan*. But I perceive, that on all hands it is attempted to produce a belief in America, that we are negociating with him. On the 7th of this month a very inſidious paragraph was inſerted in the "Bien Informè." It is therein intimated, that guided by the citizen Thomas Paine, Dr. Logan has made application to the Executive Directory, in the character of ſecret agent. The Doctor has complained of it bitterly to me. He has no need of juſtifying himſelf concerning a matter, the falſity of which I know better than any body: but he aſſured me that having once met Thomas Paine, at the houſe of a third perſon, he found him ſo prejudiced againſt the United States, and ſo opinionative, with reſpect to an influence he neither poſſeſſes among them nor us, that he abſtained from converſing any more with him. Moreover, to cut ſhort all miſunderſtanding, I engaged Dr. Logan to poſtpone, till another time, the experiments he propoſes to make on agriculture, and to return home.

As to Mr. Hitchborn, of Maſſachuſetts, I was even ignorant till now that he was in Europe. A ſingle word will ſuffice for the reſt.

We want nothing but juſtice on the part of the United States: we aſk it: we offer it to their government: it may depend upon the candor of the Executive Directory.

You will not doubt, citizen, that I approve of the communications which your zeal has cauſed you to ſeek with Mr. Murray, ſince I enable you to reſume them with official elucidations, &c. &c. &c.

CH. MAU. TALLEYRAND.

This and all the other communications from the French miniſter, heretofore publiſhed in my letter to you, were produced by my meſſage to Congreſs of the 21ſt of June, 1798, which was in theſe words:

Gentlemen of the Senate, and
Gentlemen of the Houſe of Repreſentatives,

While I congratulate you on the arrival of General Marſhall, one of our late envoys extraordinary to the French republic, at a place of ſafety, where he is juſtly held in honor, I think it my duty to communicate to you, a letter received by him from Mr. Gerry, the only one of the three who has not received his congé. This letter, together with another from the miniſter of foreign relations to him, of the 3d of April, and his anſwer of the 4th, will ſhew the ſituation in which he remains, his intentions and proſpects.

I preſume, that before this time he has received freſh inſtructions, a copy of which accompanies this meſſage, to conſent to no loans, and therefore the negociation may be conſidered at an end.

I will never ſend another miniſter to France, without aſſurances that he will be received, reſpected and honored, as the repreſentative of a great, free, powerful and independent nation.

JOHN ADAMS.

United States, June 21ſt, 1798.

In my next letter you will have the evidence of the compliance of the French government with the conditions and requisitions in my message to the Senate, nominating Mr. Murray and others, ministers and envoys to France.

JOHN ADAMS.

Quincy, May 9, 1809.

LETTER IX.

MR. HAMILTON, in his famous pamphlet, page 23, says, "the conduct pursued bore sufficient marks of courage and elevation to raise the national character to an exalted height throughout Europe."

"Much it is to be deplored that we should have been precipitated from this proud eminence, without necessity, without temptation."

It is the habitual practice of our parties, to affirm or deny, as they find it to their purpose, the honor or the disgrace that is produced in Europe by our measures. But neither party know any thing about the matter. The truth is, that our affairs are much less spoken or thought of, in Europe, than we imagine. In all parts of Europe, but especially in France and England, they are constantly misrepresented and misunderstood. Most of all in England. I will venture to say, that Mr. Hamilton wrote entirely at random, and without a glimmering of genuine information, when he mentioned both the exaltation and precipitation of our national character. To appeal to the courtiers or cabinet, or to the diplomatic corps in Europe, would be idle; because none of them will ever read Hamilton's pamphlet or these papers. But I would not hesitate to submit the whole subject to any of them. I shall take another course. Chief Justice Ellsworth is no more. I can no longer appeal to him. If I could, I would say no more than the truth, but it would be more than I shall now say; and I aver that his representation to me was the direct reverse of Hamilton's dogmatical assertions. Governor Davie still

lives, and to him I appeal with confidence. He declared to me, that to judge of the conduct of the American government, both in their naval and other preparations for war, and in their political and diplomatic negociations upon that occasion, a man must go to Europe, where it was considered as the greatest demonstration of genius, firmness and wisdom. If I represent the Governor's expressions in stronger terms than those he used, I request him to correct them.

In England I know the Anti-Jacobin Journal abused us, and so did Macdonald, Cobbett, Smith, and every Briton in Europe and America, who wished us at war with France and in alliance with England. But even in England all the sober part of the nation applauded us, and that to such a degree, that it soon became the popular cry, "We must imitate the United States of America, change our ministers, and make peace." Accordingly they did soon change their ministers and make peace at Amiens.

Mr. Liston, whose character I respect, had run through a long course of diplomatic experience in various courts and countries in Europe, from a secretary of legation and charge des affaires to the grade of minister plenipotentiary, and thence to that of ambassador at Constantinople, was probably a better judge than Mr. Hamilton, who had no experience at all in any diplomatic station, and who, I dare to say, had read very little on the subject of diplomatic functions, and still less of the history of embassies or of the printed dispatches of ambassadors. Mr. Liston, if any body, knew what would procure honor to a nation or government, and what disgrace: what was triumph, and what humiliation.

Now I affirm, that the first time Mr. Liston saw me after he had been informed of the communications of the French Directory, through Talleyrand, Mr. Pichon and Mr. Murray, he said to me these words—"*To what humiliations will not these Frenchmen stoop, to appease you? I am very sorry for it: I own, I did hope they would have gone to war with you.*" I smiled, but made no answer. I wanted no proof of the sincerity of this declaration. I

doubted not the ſincerity of his wiſh more than I did that of Mr. Canning and his aſſociates in the Anti-Jacobin, who, upon receiving the news of Mr. Murray's nomination, proclaimed that jacobiniſm was triumphant and carrying all before it in America. They could not, or would not, diſtinguiſh between jacobiniſm and neutrality. Every thing with them was jacobiniſm, except a war with France and an alliance with Great Britain. They all panted for a war between the United States and France as ſincerely, though not ſo ardently, as ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

There were not wanting inſinuations and inſtigations to me, to confer with Mr. Liſton on the ſubject of an alliance with Great Britain. And Mr. Liſton himſelf repeatedly ſuggeſted to me, in very modeſt and delicate terms, however, his readineſs to enter into any explanations on that head. I always waved it with as eaſy a politeneſs as I could. But my ſyſtem was determined, and had been ſo for more than twenty years, that is, to enter into no alliance with any power in Europe.—In caſe of war with England, I would not enter into any alliance with France. In caſe of war with France, I would not form any alliance with England. We want no alliance: we are equal to all our own neceſſary wars. "*Non tali auxilio, nec defenſoribus iſtis, tempus eget.*" We might aid and be aided by a power at war with our enemy, and might concert operations from time to time; but I would make no engagement that ſhould tie up our hands from making peace whenever we pleaſed. Had the war with France continued, I might have been drawn by the force of public opinion, or the influence of the legiſlature, into an alliance with England; but it would have been againſt my own judgment and inclination.

Let me conclude this letter with an anecdote. Dr. Franklin told me, that before his return to America from England, in 1775, he was in company, I believe at Lord Spencer's, with a number of Engliſh noblemen, when the converſation turned upon fables, thoſe of Æſop, La Fontaine, Gay, Moore, &c. &c. Some one of the company obſerved that he thought the ſubject was exhauſted. He

did not believe that any man could now find an animal, beaſt, bird, or fiſh, that he could work into a new fable with any ſucceſs; and the whole company appeared to applaud the idea, except Franklin, who was ſilent. The gentlemen inſiſted on his opinion. He ſaid, with ſubmiſſion to their lordſhips, he believed the ſubject was inexhauſtible, and that many new and inſtructive fables might be made out of ſuch materials. Can you think of any one at preſent? If your lordſhip will furniſh me a pen, ink, and paper, I believe I can furniſh your lordſhip with one in a few minutes. The paper was brought, and he ſat down and wrote:—

Once upon a time, an eagle ſcaling round a farmer's barn, and eſpying a hare, darted down upon him like a ſun beam, ſeized him in his claws, and re-mounted with him in the air. He ſoon found that he had a creature of more courage and ſtrength than a hare, for which, notwithſtanding the keenneſs of his eye-ſight, he had miſtaken a cat. The ſnarling and ſcrambling of the prey was very inconvenient, and what was worſe, ſhe had diſengaged herſelf from his talons, graſped his body with her four limbs, ſo as to ſtop his breath, and ſeized faſt hold of his throat with her teeth. Pray, ſaid the eagle, let go your hold and I will releaſe you. Very fine, ſaid the cat, I have no fancy to fall from this height and be cruſhed to death. You have taken me up, and you ſhall ſtoop and let me down. The eagle thought it neceſſary to ſtoop accordingly. The moral was ſo applicable to England and America, that the fable was allowed to be original, and highly applauded.

Let HAMILTON ſay what he will, the French Directory found it convenient to ſtoop and ſet us down on our honeſt ground of neutrality and impartiality, as the Engliſh eagle did formerly, and now does a ſecond time.

JOHN ADAMS.

Quincy, May 1809.

LETTER X.

ANOTHER of my crimes, according to my great accuſer, page 28, was nominating Mr. Murray, without previous conſultation with any of my miniſters. To this charge I ſhall ſay but little at preſent.

In England the firſt magiſtrate is reſponſible for nothing; his miniſters for every thing: Here, according to the practice, if not the conſtitution, the miniſters are reſponſible for nothing; the Preſident for every thing. He is made to anſwer, before the people, not only for every thing done by his miniſters, but even for all the acts of the Legiſlature: Witneſs the Alien and Sedition Laws. In all great and eſſential meaſures, he is bound by his honor and his conſcience, by his oath to the conſtitution, as well as his reſponſibility to the public opinion of the nation, to act his own mature and unbiaſſed judgment, though unfortunately, it may be in direct contradiction to the advice of all his miniſters. This was my ſituation in more than one inſtance. It had been ſo in the nomination of Mr. Gerry; it was afterwards ſo in the pardon of Fries. Two meaſures that I recollect with infinite ſatisfaction, and which will conſole me in my laſt hour.

In the caſe now in queſtion I perfectly knew the ſentiments of all my miniſters. I knew every argument they could alledge, and moreover, I knew the ſecret motives that governed them, better than they did themſelves. I knew them then, and I know them now: Believe it or diſbelieve it who will, at the preſent time: hereafter the world will be convinced of it.

I knew that if I called the heads of departments together, and aſked their advice, three of them would very laconically proteſt againſt the meaſure. The other two would be loath to diſſent from their brethren, and would more modeſtly and mildly concur with them. The conſequence would be, that the whole would be inſtantaneouſly communicated to A, B, C, D, E, F, &c. in the Senate, and G, H, I, &c. in the Houſe of Repreſentatives; the public and the preſſes would have it at once, and a

clamor raiſed and a prejudice propagated againſt the meaſure, that would probably excite the Senate to put their negative on the whole plan. If I had called the heads of departments together, and aſked their advice, I knew from paſt experience, that their anſwers would have been flat negatives. If I had aſked their reaſons, they would be ſuch arguments as Hamilton has recorded, for he, it ſeems, was their recording ſecretary. 1. The etiquette which required, according to them, that France ſhould ſend a miniſter to us. 2. That a negociation with France would give offence to Great Britain and to Ruſſia, and probably involve us in a war with theſe powers. I had twenty times anſwered theſe arguments, by ſaying that there was no ſuch etiquette. It was true that in ancient and more barbarous times, when nations had been inflamed by long wars, and the people wrought up to a degree of fury, on both ſides, ſo as to excite apprehenſions that ambaſſadors would be inſulted or maſſacreed by the populace, or even impriſoned as in Turkey, ſovereigns had inſiſted that ambaſſadors ſhould be exchanged, and that one ſhould be held as a hoſtage for the other. It had even been inſiſted that a French ambaſſador ſhould embark at Calais, at the ſame hour that an Engliſh ambaſſador embarked at Dover. But theſe times were paſſed. Nations ſent ambaſſadors now as they pleaſed. Franklin and his aſſociates had been ſent to France; Mr. Jay had been ſent to Spain; I had been ſent to Holland; Mr. Izzard had been commiſſioned to Tuſcany; Mr. W. Lee, to Vienna and Berlin, without any ſtipulation for ſending miniſters in return. We had a miniſter in London three years, without any miniſter from England in return. We have had a miniſter at Berlin, without any from Pruſſia.

As to the offence that would be taken by Great Britain, I aſked, ſhall we propoſe any thing to France, or agree to any thing inconſiſtent with our treaties and pledged faith with England? Certainly not. What right has England, then, to be offended? Have we not as clear a right to make peace as ſhe has? We are at war with France, at leaſt in part. If Britain ſhould make peace

with France, what right have we to complain, provided ſhe ſtipulates nothing inconſiſtent with her treaty with us?

As to Ruſſia, what has ſhe to do with us, or we with her? I had confidence enough in the aſſurances given, firmly to believe that our envoys would be received and reſpected. Candidates enough were ready to run the riſque, and Hamilton himſelf would have been very proud to have been one of them, if he had not been Commander in Chief of the Army.

I will acknowledge that when the terror of the power and anger of Great Britain have been held up to me, in a manner that appears, to me, to be baſe and ſervile, I ſometimes was provoked to ſay, that in a juſt cauſe, when the eſſential character and intereſts of the United States ſhould be wronged by Great Britain, I ſhall hold her power in total contempt. It may be ſaid, for it has been ſaid, that this was imprudent, and that I was fretted. Let it be ſaid by whom it will. I now repeat the ſame ſentiment, after the cooleſt reflection of ten years.

On the other hand, by making the nomination on my own authority, I believed that the heads of departments would have ſome diſcretion, and although I knew that the Britiſh faction would excite a clamor, and that ſome of the Senators, Repreſentatives, and heads of departments would make no exertions to diſcountenance it, if they did not ſecretly or openly encourage it: yet I was ſo perfectly convinced of the national ſenſe, and that the Senate felt it ſo ſtrongly, that they would not dare to negative it, even if the majority had diſliked it, which I very well knew they did not. I thought a clamor after the fact, would be much leſs dangerous than a clamor before it. And ſo it proved in experience. A clamor there was, as I always knew there would be, and Alexander Hamilton had a principal under-hand in exciting it.

It is well known that there are continued interviews between the members of the Senate and the members of the Houſe, and the heads of departments. Eternal ſolicitations for nominations to office, are made in this manner. There is not an executive meaſure, that members

of Congreſs are not almoſt conſtantly employed in pumping from the heads of departments. There is not a legiſlative meaſure that the heads of departments do not intermeddle in. It really deſerves conſideration whether it would not be better that heads of departments ſhould be members of the legiſlature. There they would be confronted in all things. Now all is ſecrecy and darkneſs. Waſhington, I know, was nearly as much vexed and tortured by theſe things as I was, and reſigned his office to get rid of them. And ſo would I have done, with great joy, if I could have been ſure of a ſucceſſor whoſe ſentiments were as conformable to mine, as he knew mine were to his.

JOHN ADAMS.

Quincy, May 17, 1809.

LETTER XI.

MR. HAMILTON, in his pamphlet, page 28, ſpeaking of Talleyrand's diſpatches, ſays, "overtures ſo circuitous and informal, through a perſon who was not the regular organ of the French government for making them, to a perſon who was not the regular organ of the French government for receiving them, &c. were a very inadequate baſis for the inſtitution of a new miſſion."

Here, again, Mr. Hamilton's total ignorance or oblivion of the practice of our own government, as well as the conſtant uſage of other nations in diplomatic proceedings, appears in all its luſtre. 1784 the Congreſs of the United States, the then ſovereign of our country, iſſued fifteen commiſſions, as I remember; if I miſtake the number Col. Humphreys can correct me, for he was the ſecretary of legation to them all, and poſſeſſes, as I ſuppoſe, the original parchments, to John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferſon, to form commercial treaties with all the commercial powers of Europe, and the Barbary ſtates. Our inſtructions were to communi-

cate these credentials to the ambassadors of these powers at Versailles, not to go to those courts. And we did communicate them in this informal and circuitous manner, and received very civil answers. We were not told, if Congress wishes any connexions with us, commercial or political, let them send ambassadors directly to our courts. It is inconsistent with our dignity to receive, or pay any attention to such indirect, circuitous, and informal overtures.

These indirect and circuitous communications, as Hamilton calls them, are of established usage and daily practice all over the world. Instances of them without number might be quoted. I shall only recite two or three.

The Baron de Thulemier, ambassador from Frederick the great, king of Prussia, whose name and character Mr. Hamilton affects to admire, wrote me a letter when I was minister Plenipotentiary in Holland, informing me that he had received the commands of the king, his master, to make me a visit, and communicate something to me as minister from the United States of America, and desired to know at what hour I would receive him. I wrote him in answer, that I would have the honor of receiving him at twelve o'clock, of the next day, or if he wished an earlier interview I would call on him, at his hotel, at any hour he should be pleased to indicate. To this I received no answer, but at the hour I had mentioned, his excellency appeared at my house, in the habiliments and with the equipage of his ministerial character. He said that the King his master, had ordered him to visit me and ask my opinion of a connection and treaty between Prussia and the United States of America. What a figure should I have made, if I had said, this is all circuitous and informal. Your master, if he wishes a connection, commercial or political with America, must send an ambassador to Philadelphia, and propose it to Congress! Yet Mr. Hamilton's doctrine and reasoning would have required this. The king, however, would have expected more sense of propriety, more knowledge of the intercourse of nations, and a more rational answer from a deputy of one

of our ſavage tribes, or one of the migratory hordes of Africa or Tartary. My anſwer was, be pleaſed, ſir, to preſent my moſt profound reſpects to his majeſty, and inform him, that though I have no commiſſion or inſtructions to enter into official conferences upon the ſubject, I am very ſenſible of the high honor done me by this communication, and have no heſitation in expreſſing my private opinion, that ſuch a connection between the United States and his majeſty's dominions would be highly honorable and advantageous, and I had no doubt Congreſs would be unanimous in the ſame ſentiments. That without loſs of time I would tranſmit to them an account of this converſation, and had no doubt they would authoriſe a miniſter to treat with his majeſty's miniſter. The Baron then ſaid, he was farther directed to aſk my opinion of a proper baſis of a treaty. I anſwered, our treaty lately concluded with Holland would in my opinion, be ſuch a baſis.

Congreſs, when they received this information from me, did not ſay, this is all informal and indirect; from obſcure and unauthoriſed agents; the king of Pruſſia muſt ſend us an ambaſſador. Yet I ſent them no official act of the king; no official letter under hand and ſeal from his prime miniſter, as Mr. Murray did to me. All was mere parole evidence; mere verbal converſation. Yet Congreſs immediately ſent a commiſſion to Adams, Franklin, and Jefferſon, to treat with the king's miniſter. The king ſent a commiſſion to his miniſter, and a treaty was negociated, concluded and ratified, which now remains among the archives and printed documents of our country, not at all to her diſgrace.

The king had previouſly ordered his ambaſſador to expreſs to me his entire ſatisfaction with the interview between his ambaſſador and me; that he had maturely examined our treaty with Holland, and approved it as a baſis of negociation with him.

Another inſtance. Mr. Weems, a young gentleman of liberal education from Virginia or Maryland, went to England in hopes of obtaining holy orders in the Church.

He wrote a letter to me, as American miniſter in Holland, though he had never ſeen me, and indeed has never ſeen me ſince, bitterly complaining not only of the ſtern refuſal, but even of the rough treatment he had received from the Engliſh biſhops, and even from the great Hurd. He deſired to know if he could receive ordination from the biſhops in Holland. There were no biſhops in Holland; but there were Proteſtant biſhops in Denmark. At the firſt meeting of the ambaſſadors, I aſked Mr. De Saint Saphorin, the ambaſſador from Denmark, whether an American candidate for the miniſtry could receive from the biſhops in his country Epiſcopal ordination; and whether any oaths, ſubſcriptions or profeſſions of faith, would be required; and whether the articles of the church of England were ſufficiently conformable to the faith of Denmark? "Mon Dieu! Je n'en ſais rien"—My God! ſaid Saint Saphorin, I know nothing of the matter; but if you deſire it, I will ſoon inform myſelf. I thanked him, and ſhould be much obliged to him. In a ſhorter time than I could imagine, he came to inform me that he had written our converſation to the prime miniſter of his court, who had laid it before the king, who had taken it into conſideration in his council, and had ordered it to be laid before the convocation, who had unanimouſly determined that any American candidate of proper qualifications and good moral character ſhould at any time receive ordination from any biſhop in Denmark, without taking any oath or profeſſing any other faith, but merely ſubſcribing the articles of the church of England. He even went ſo far as to ſay that the king, if we deſired it, would appoint a biſhop in one of his iſlands in the Weſt Indies to accommodate American candidates. I wrote this to Mr. Weems, and it ſoon procured him a more polite reception from the Engliſh clergy. Indeed it laid the firſt foundation not only of Mr. Weems's ordination, but of the whole ſyſtem of Epiſcopacy in the United States.

I alſo wrote a hiſtory of it to Congreſs, who inſtead of reprimanding me, ordered me to tranſmit their thanks to the king of Denmark, which I did afterwards, through

another indirect and informal channel, that of his ambaſſador at the court of London.

It ſeems that neither St. Saphorin, nor his prime miniſter, nor the king their maſter, nor his council, nor the whole convocation of biſhops, nor our American congreſs, were ſuch profound adepts in the law of nations and the diplomatic intercourſe of ſovereigns, as Mr. Hamilton. None of them diſcovered that it was inconſiſtent with their dignity to take notice of any thing leſs formal and direct than immediate communications from a reſident ambaſſador.

Let me add another example. At the inſtigation of the Count de Vergennes, the Swediſh ambaſſador at Verſailles had written to his court to know whether it would be agreeable to them to form a treaty with the United States. Receiving an anſwer in the affirmative, he ſuggeſted this to Dr. Franklin, who upon this ſimple verbal inſinuation, wrote an account of it to Congreſs, who immediately ſent him a commiſſion. The king of Sweden ſent a commiſſion to his ambaſſador at Verſailles. The treaty was concluded at Paris, and afterwards ratified by both powers. Yet no ambaſſador from Sweden to the United States has ever appeared, and no miniſter from the United States has ever gone to Sweden to this day.

JOHN ADAMS.

Quincy, May 18, 1809.

LETTER XII.

IN *pamphlet*, page 27, it is ſaid that the great alteration in public opinion had put it completely in the power of our executive to control the machinations of any future public agent, of France. Therefore Philadelphia was a ſafer ſcene of negociation than Paris.

Mr. Hamilton's erroneous conceptions of the public opinion may be excuſed by the conſiderations that he was not a native of the United States; that he was born and

bred in the Weſt Indies, till he went to Scotland, for education, where he ſpent his time in a ſeminary of learning, till ſeventeen years of age; after which no man ever perfectly acquired a national character; then entered a college at New York, from whence he iſſued into the army as an aid de camp. In theſe ſituations he could ſcarcely acquire the opinions, feelings, or principles of the American people. His error may be excuſed by the further conſideration, that his time was chiefly ſpent in his pleaſures, in his electioneering viſits, conferences and correſpondences, in propagating prejudices againſt every man whom he thought his ſuperior in the public eſtimation; and in compoſing ambitious reports upon finance, while the real buſineſs of the treaſury was done by Duer, by Wolcott, and even, for ſome time and in part, by Tench Coxe.

His obſervation that "France will never be without ſecret agents," is true: and it is equally true that England will always have ſecret agents and emiſſaries too. "That her partizans among our own citizens, can much better promote her cauſe than any agents ſhe can ſend, is alſo true:" but it is at leaſt equally true of the partizans of Great Britain. We have ſeen, in the foregoing papers, glaring and atrocious inſtances of the exertions of her public agents, ſecret emiſſaries and partizans among our citizens. But none have yet been mentioned that bear any compariſon, in point of guilt and arrogance, with thoſe of all kinds that have been exhibited within the laſt two or three years.

My worthy fellow-citizens! Our form of government, ineſtimable as it is, expoſes us more than any other to the inſidious intrigues and peſtilented influence of foreign nations. Nothing but our inflexible neutrality can preſerve us. The public negociations and ſecret intrigues of the Engliſh and the French have been employed, for centuries, in every court and country of Europe. Look back to the hiſtory of Spain, Holland, Germany, Ruſſia, Sweden, Denmark, Pruſſia, Italy, and Turkey, for the laſt hundred years. How many revolutions have been cauſed!

How many emperors and kings have fallen victims to the alternate triumphs of parties, excited by Engliſhmen or Frenchmen? And can we expect to eſcape the vigilant attention of politicians ſo experienced, ſo keen ſighted, and ſo rich? If we convince them that our attachment to neutrality is unchangeable, they will let us alone: but as long as a hope remains, in either power, of ſeducing us to engage in war on his ſide and againſt his enemy, we ſhall be torn and convulſed by their manœuvres.

Never was there a groſſer miſtake of public opinion than that of Mr. Hamilton. The great alteration in public opinion had not then, nor has it yet, taken place. The French republic ſtill exiſted: The French people were ſtill conſidered as ſtruggling for liberty, amidſt all their internal revolutions, their conflicts of parties, and their bloody wars againſt the coalitions of European powers. Monarchy, empire, had not been ſuggeſted. Bonaparte had appeared only as a ſoldier; had acted on the public ſtage in no civil or political employment. A ſenſe of gratitude, for ſervices rendered us in our revolution, by far more ſincere and ardent than reaſon or juſtice could warrant, ſtill remained on the minds, not only of our republicans, but of great numbers of our ſoundeſt federaliſts. Did Mr. Hamilton recollect the ſtate of our preſſes? Recollect the names and popular eloquence of the editors of the oppoſition papers? That ſcoffing, ſcorning wit, and that cauſtic malignity of ſoul which appeared ſo remarkably in all the writings of Thomas Paine and Callender, which to the diſgrace of human nature, never fails to command attention and applauſe? The members of the Senate and Houſe, who were decided againſt the adminiſtration, their continual intercourſe and communications with French emiſſaries? The hideous clamor againſt the alien law, and ſedition law, both conſidered as levelled entirely againſt the French and their friends, and the ſurrender according to the Britiſh treaty, of the Iriſh murderer Naſh, impoſed upon the public for Jonathan Robbins? Did he recollect the inſurrection in Pennſylvania, the univerſal and perpetual inflammatory publications

againſt the land tax, ſtamp tax, coach tax, exciſe law, and eight per cent loan? Did he never ſee nor hear of the circular letters of members of Congreſs from the middle and ſouthern ſtates? Did he know nothing of the biting ſarcaſms, the burning rage againſt himſelf and his own army? Did he know nothing of a kind of journal that was publiſhed of every irregular act of any officer or ſoldier, of every military puniſhment that was inflicted, under the appellation of the Canibal's Progreſs? Did he ſee nothing of the French cockades oſtentatiouſly exhibited againſt the American cockades?

Had a French miniſter been ſeen here with his ſuite, he would have been inſtantly informed of every ſource and ſymptom of diſcontent. Almoſt every Frenchman upon the continent, and they were then numerous in all the ſtates, would have been employed in criminating the American government, in applauding the condeſcenſion of the French Directory, and the friendly, conciliating diſpoſition of the French nation. Nothing could have been kept ſecret. The popular clamor for peace on any terms would have been very difficult, if not impoſſible, to reſiſt. The multitude in Philadelphia, as it was, were almoſt as ripe to pull me out of my houſe as they had been to dethrone Waſhington in the time of Genet. Even the night of the faſt day, the ſtreets were crouded with multitudinous aſſemblies of the people, eſpecially that before my door, and kept in order only, as many people thought, by a military patrol, ordered, I believe, by the Governor of Pennſylvania.

In theſe circumſtances, it was my opinion, and it is ſo ſtill, it was infinitely better to conduct the negociation at Paris than in Philadelphia. But if this was and is an error, it was certainly not of ſuch conſequence as Hamilton thought fit to repreſent it. If it was an error, I humbly conceive it would have better become Mr. Hamilton to have been ſilent, than to endeavor to make it unpopular—ſince the ſtep was taken and irrevocable, when he wrote:

But the real truth is, he was in hopes, as well as Mr. Liſton, that the French government would neither ſend

a miniſter here nor receive one there—in ſhort, that they would have gone to war with us. If we had waited for a miniſter here, much time would have been loſt: our little naval force under Talbot, Truxton, Decatur, Little, &c. was doing wonders in protecting our commerce, and in fighting and capturing French ſhips of war. Some of our citizens were not wanting in irritating expreſſions of exultation and triumph, particularly in parading a French national ſhip that had been captured by Decatur up the Delaware, in ſight of all the citizens of Philadelphia, with the French national colors reverſed under our American flag. Hamilton hoped that ſuch provocations would produce an irreconcileable breach and a declaration of war. He was diſappointed and loſt the command of his army. *Hinc illæ Lacrimæ!*

There were other circumſtances of more ſerious and ſolid importance, indicative of public opinion, which Mr. Hamilton, if he had been a vigilant and ſagacious ſtateſman, could not have overlooked. The venerable patriarchs, Pendleton and Wythe, of Virginia, openly declaimed for peace; the former came out in print with his name, proteſting againſt a war with our ſiſter republic of France. General Heath came out with an addreſs to the public in Maſſachuſetts, declaring that every man he met was decidedly for peace. When the election was coming on, the legiſlature of Maſſachuſetts dare not truſt the people, either at large or in diſtricts, to chooſe electors, but aſſumed that office to themſelves. In New-York, the great intereſt and vaſt bodies of people, who are ſuppoſed to follow or direct the two great families of Clintons and Livingſtons, aided by all the addreſs and dexterity of Aaron Burr, was decidedly for peace with France. In Pennſylvania, Governor M'Kean, with his majority of thirty thouſand votes, or in other words, at the head of the two vaſt bodies of Germans and Iriſh, reinforced by great numbers of Engliſh Preſbyterians, Quakers and Anabaptiſts, were decidedly againſt a war with France.

After enumerating all theſe ſymptons of the popular bias, it would be frivolous to enlarge upon the converſa-

tions of which I was informed at taverns and insurance offices, threatening violence to the President by pulling him out of his chair; upon the French cockades that were every where paraded before my eyes, in opposition to the black cockade, or upon the declarations and oaths, which I know were made by no small numbers, that if we went to war with France, and the French should come here, they would join them against the federalists and the English. These things I recollect with grief, because they do no honor to our country: but I must say they disgrace it no more than many more solemn actions and declarations of the opposite party against France, and in favor of England, have done within the last twelve months.

In these circumstances, it was the height of folly to say as Hamilton says, that it would have been safer to negociate at Philadelphia than at Paris. As to our ambassador's being overawed in Paris, by any finesse of politicians, or triumphs of the French arms: we must take care to send men who are equal to such trials. The French have not, as yet, gained any great and unjust advantages of us by all their policy. Our envoys were precisely instructed. Every article was prescribed that was to be insisted on as an ultimatum. In a treaty they could not depart from a punctilio. A convention they might make, as they did, at their own risque. But the President and Senate were under no obligation to ratify it. Had it betrayed a single point of essential honor or interest, I would have sent it back, as Mr. Jefferson did the treaty with England, without laying it before the Senate. If I had been doubtful, the Senate would have decided.

Where, then, was the danger of this negociation? Nowhere but in the disturbed imagination of Alexander Hamilton. To me only it was dangerous. To me, as a public man, it was fatal, and that only because Alexander Hamilton was pleased to wield it as a poisoned weapon, with the express purpose of destroying. Though I owe him no thanks for this, I most heartily rejoice in it, because it has given me eight years, incomparably the happiest of my life: whereas, had I been chosen president

again, I am certain I could not have lived another year. It was utterly impoſſible that I could have lived through one year more of ſuch labors and cares as were ſtudiouſly and maliciouſly accumulated upon me, by the French faction and the Britiſh faction; the former aided by the republicans, and the latter by Alexander Hamilton, and his ſatellites.

JOHN ADAMS.

Quincy, May 26, 1809.

LETTER XIII.

MR. HAMILTON, in his pamphlet, page 21, ſpeaks of the anterior miſſion of Meſſrs. Pinckney, Marſhall and Gerry, and ſays, "it was *reſolved* to make another, and a more "ſolemn experiment in the form of a commiſſion of "three."

When I firſt read this ſentence, I am not certain whether it excited moſt of aſtoniſhment, indignation, contempt, or ridicule. By *whom* was this meaſure *reſolved?* By Preſident Waſhington? Certainly not. If it had been he would have nominated the miniſters. By the Preſident elect, Mr. Adams? Certainly not. He had not been conſulted. His reſolutions were not known.—By whom, then, was this important reſolution taken? By Mr. Hamilton and his privy counſellors. And what had Mr. Hamilton and his privy counſellors to do with the buſineſs? And who were his privy counſellors?

Page 22, he ſays, "the expediency of this ſtep was "ſuggeſted to Mr. Adams, through a federal channel, a "conſiderable time before he determined to take it. He "heſitated whether it could be done, after the rejection "of General Pinckney, without national debaſement. "The doubt was an honorable one." I diſclaim and renounce all the honor of this doubt. I never entertained ſuch a doubt for a moment. I might aſk the opinion of twenty perſons, (for I too "conſulted much") in order to diſcover whether there was any doubt in the public

mind, or any party who were averſe to ſuch a meaſure, or had any doubt about it. But I never had any heſitation myſelf. This paſſage, like all the reſt of this pamphlet, ſhews that it was written from his mere imagination, from confuſed rumors, or downright falſe information.

It is true "the expediency of the ſtep was ſuggeſted to Mr. Adams," before he took the ſtep and before he had time to take it; but long after he had determined to take it. The myſtery may be revealed. I have no motive, whatever others may have, to conceal or diſſemble it.

The morning after my inauguration, Mr. Fiſher Ames made me a viſit, to take leave. His period in Congreſs had expired, and the delicacy of his health, the deſpondency of his diſpoſition, and deſpair of a re-election from the increaſe of the oppoſite party in his diſtrict, had induced him to decline to ſtand a candidate. I was no longer to have the aſſiſtance of his counſel and eloquence, though Mr. Hamilton continued to enjoy both till his death. Mr. Ames was no doubt one of Mr. Hamilton's privy council, when he *reſolved* to ſend a new commiſſion of three. Mr. Ames, with much gravity and ſolemnity, adviſed me to inſtitute a new miſſion to France. Our affairs with that republic were in an unpleaſant and dangerous ſituation, and the people, in a long receſs of congreſs muſt have ſome object on which to fix their contemplation and their hopes. And he recommended Mr. George Cabot, for the northern ſtates to be one of the three, if a commiſſion was to be ſent, or alone, if but one was to go.

I anſwered Mr. Ames, that the ſubject had almoſt engroſſed my attention for a long time. That I ſhould take every thing into ſerious conſideration, and determine nothing ſuddenly; that I ſhould make deliberate enquiries concerning characters, and maturely conſider the qualities and qualifications of candidates, before any thing was finally determined. Mr. Ames departed for Maſſachuſetts.

I had rolled all theſe things in my own mind long before. The French nation and their government were in

a very umbrageous and inflammable diſpoſition. Much delicacy and deliberation were neceſſary in the choice of characters. Moſt of the prominent characters in America, were as well known at Paris, as they were at Philadelphia. I had ſometimes thought of ſending Mr. Madiſon, and Mr. Hamilton to join Mr. Pinckney in a new commiſſion. I had thought of Mr. Ames himſelf, as well as Mr. Cabot, Judge Dana, Mr. Gerry, and many others in the northern, middle, and ſouthern ſtates. I thought much of Mr. Jefferſon, but had great doubts whether the conſtitution would allow me to ſend the Vice Preſident abroad. The nation at large had aſſigned him a ſtation, which I doubted whether he had a right to abandon, or I a right to invite him to relinquiſh, though but for a time.

I had great doubts about re-appointing Mr. Pinckney. He might have been ſo affected with the horrors he had ſeen or heard in France, as to have uttered ſome expreſſions, which reported by ſpies to the ruling powers, might have excited prejudices againſt him, which would inſure his ſecond rejection, and that of his colleagues too. But as I knew of no ſuch accuſation, I could not bear the thought of abandoning him. I had not time to communicate all theſe reflections to Mr. Ames, and, moreover, I had buſineſs of more importance to do. I had long wiſhed to avail myſelf and the public of the fine talents and amiable qualities and manners of Mr. Madiſon. Soon after Mr. Ames left me, I ſought and obtained an interview with Mr. Jefferſon. With this gentleman I had lived on terms of intimate friendſhip for five and twenty years, had acted with him in dangerous times and arduous conflicts, and always found him aſſiduous, laborious, and as far as I could judge, upright and faithful. Though by this time I differed from him in opinion by the whole horizon concerning the practicability and ſucceſs of the French revolution, and ſome other points, I had no reaſon to think that he differed materially from me with regard to our national conſtitution. I did not think that the rumbling noiſe of party calumny ought to diſcourage me from conſulting men whom I knew to be attached to the

intereſt of the nation, and whoſe experience, genius, learning and travels had eminently qualified them to give advice. I aſked Mr. Jefferſon what he thought of another trip to Paris, and whether he thought the conſtitution and the people would be willing to ſpare him for a ſhort time? Are you determined to ſend to France? Yes. That is right, ſaid Mr. Jefferſon; but without conſidering whether the conſtitution will allow it or not, I am ſo ſick of reſiding in Europe, that I believe I ſhall never go there again. I replied, I own I have ſtrong doubts whether it would be legal to appoint you; but I believe no man could do the buſineſs ſo well. What do you think of ſending Mr. Madiſon? Do you think he would accept of an appointment? I do not know, ſaid Mr. Jefferſon. Waſhington wanted to appoint him ſome time ago, and kept the place open for him a long time; but he never could get him to ſay that he would go. Other characters were conſidered, and other converſation enſued. We parted as good friends as we had always lived; but we conſulted very little together afterwards. Party violence ſoon rendered it impracticable, or at leaſt uſeleſs, and this party violence was excited by Hamilton more than any other man. I will not take leave of Mr. Jefferſon in this place, without declaring my opinion that the accuſations againſt him of blind devotion to France; of hoſtility to England; of hatred to commerce; of partiality and duplicity in his late negociations with the belligerent powers, are without foundation.

From Mr. Jefferſon I went to one of the heads of departments, whom Mr. Waſhington had appointed, and I had no thoughts of removing. Indeed I had then no objection to any of the Secretaries. I aſked him what he thought of ſending Mr. Madiſon to France, with orwithout others? Is it determined to ſend to France at all? Determined? Nothing is determined till it is executed, ſmiling. But why not?—I thought it deſerved conſideration.—So it does; but ſuppoſe it determined, what do you think of ſending Mr. Madiſon? Is it determined to ſend Mr. Madiſon? No; but it deſerves conſideration.

Sending Mr. Madiſon will make dire work among the paſſions of our parties in Congreſs, and out of doors, through the ſtates! Are we forever to be overawed and directed by party paſſions? All this converſation on my part was with the moſt perfect civility, good humor, and indeed familiarity: but I found it excited a profound gloom and ſolemn countenance in my companion, which after ſome time broke out in "Mr. Preſident, we are willing to reſign." Nothing could have been more unexpected to me than this obſervation—Nothing was farther from my thoughts than to give any pain or uneaſineſs. I had ſaid nothing that could poſſibly diſpleaſe, except pronouncing the name of Madiſon. I reſtrained my ſurpriſe, however, and only ſaid, I hope nobody will reſign: I am ſatisfied with all the public officers.

Upon further inquiries of the other heads of departments, and of other perſons, I found that party paſſions had ſo deep and extenſive roots, that I ſeriouſly doubted whether the Senate would not negative Mr. Madiſon if I ſhould name him. Rather than expoſe him to a negative, or a doubtful conteſt in the Senate, I concluded to omit him. If I had nominated Madiſon, I ſhould have nominated Hamilton with him. The former, I knew, was much eſteemed in France; the latter was rather an object of jealouſy. But I thought the French would tolerate one for the ſake of the other. And I thought too that the manners of the one would ſoon wear off the prejudices againſt him, and probably make him a greater favorite than the other. But having given up Madiſon, I ought to give up Hamilton too. Who then ſhould I name? I mentioned Mr. Dana and Mr. Gerry to the heads of departments and to many leading men in both Houſes.—They all preferred Mr. Dana. But it was evident enough to me, that neither Dana nor Gerry was their man. Dana was appointed, but refuſed. I then called the heads of departments together, and propoſed Mr. Gerry. All the five voices unanimouſly were againſt him. Such inveterate prejudice ſhocked me. I ſaid nothing, but was determined I would not be the ſlave of it. I knew the man

infinitely better than all of them. He was nominated and approved, and finally ſaved the peace of the nation; for he alone diſcovered and furniſhed the evidence that X. Y. and Z. were employed by Talleyrand; and he alone brought home the direct, formal and official aſſurances upon which the ſubſequent commiſſion proceeded, and peace was made.

I conſidered Mr. Ames's candidate, Mr. Cabot, as deliberately as any of the others, and with as favorable and friendly a diſpoſition towards him as any other, without exception. But I knew his character and connections were as well known in France, particularly by Talleyrand, as Mr. Gerry's were; and that there were great objections againſt the former, and none at all againſt the latter. It would be therefore inexcuſable in me to hazard the ſucceſs of the miſſion merely to gratify the paſſions of a party in America, eſpecially as I knew Mr. Gerry, to ſay the leaſt, to be full as well qualified by his ſtudies, his experience, and every quality for the ſervice, as the other.

I afterwards nominated Mr. Cabot to be Secretary of the Navy, a ſtation as uſeful as important, and as honorable as the other, and for which he was eminently qualified. But this he refuſed.

No man had a greater ſhare in propagating and diffuſing theſe prejudices againſt Mr. Gerry than Hamilton, whether he had formerly conceived jealouſies againſt him as a rival candidate for the Secretaryſhip of the Treaſury: for Mr. Gerry was a financier, and had been employed for years on the committee on the treaſury in the old Congreſs, and a moſt indefatigable member too. That committee had laid the foundation for the preſent ſyſtem of the treaſury, and had organized it almoſt as well, though they had not the aſſiſtance of clerks and other conveniences, as at preſent. Any man who will look into the journals of the old Congreſs, may ſee the organization and the daily labors and reports of that committee, and may form ſome judgment of the talents and ſervices of Mr. Gerry in that department. I knew that the officers of the treaſury in Hamilton's time dreaded to ſee him

riſe in the Houſe upon any queſtion of finance, becauſe they ſaid he was a man of ſo much influence, that they always feared he would diſcover ſome error or carry ſome point againſt them—Or whether he feared that Mr. Gerry would be Preſident of the United States before him, I know not. He was not alone, however. His friends among the heads of departments and their correſpondents in Boſton, New-York and Philadelphia, ſympathized with him very cordially in his hatred of Gerry, and of every other man who had labored and ſuffered early in the revolution.

This preference of Mr. Gerry to Mr. Cabot was my firſt mortal offence againſt my ſovereign heads of departments and their diſciples in all the ſtates. It never was or has been forgiven me by thoſe who call themſelves, or are called by others, "the leading men" among the federaliſts.

Mr. Hamilton ſays, page 49, "After the rejection of "Mr. Pinckney by the government of France, immediate-"ly after the inſtalment of Mr. Adams as Preſident, and "long before the meaſure was taken, I urged a member "of Congreſs, then high in the confidence of the Preſi-"dent, to propoſe to him the immediate appointment of "three commiſſioners, of whom Mr. Jefferſon or Mr. "Madiſon to be one, to make another attempt to negoci-"ate."

I will relate all that I can recollect relative to this ſubject. Mr. Tracy of Connecticut, who indeed was always in my confidence, came to me, I believe at the opening of the ſpecial ſeſſion of Congreſs which I called ſoon after my inauguration, and produced a long, elaborate letter from Mr. Hamilton, containing a whole ſyſtem of inſtruction for the conduct of the Preſident, the Senate, and the Houſe of Repreſentatives. I read it very deliberately, and really thought the man was in a delirium. It appeared to me a very extraordinary inſtance of volunteer empiriciſm thus to preſcribe for a Preſident, Senate, and Houſe of Repreſentatives all deſperately ſick and in a ſtate of deplorable debility, without being called. And when I maturely conſidered the contents of the letter, my ſur-

priſe was increaſed. I deſpiſed and deteſted the letter too much to take a copy of it, which I now regret. This letter is ſtill in being, and I doubt not many copies of it are extant. I moſt earneſtly requeſt any gentleman who poſſeſſes one to publiſh it. That letter, though it had no influence with me, had ſo much with both Houſes of Congreſs, as to lay the foundation of the overthrow of the federal party, and of the revolution that followed four years afterwards. I will endeavor to recollect as much of the contents of it as I can, and if I am incorrect in any point, thoſe who poſſeſs the letter can, by the publication of it, eaſily ſet all right.

It began by a diſſertation on the extraordinarily critical ſituation of the United States.

It recommended a new miſſion to France of three commiſſioners, Mr. Jefferſon or Mr. Madiſon to be one.

It recommended the raiſing an army of fifty thouſand men, ten thouſand of them to be cavalry, an army of great importance in ſo extenſive a country vulnerable at ſo many points on the frontiers, and ſo acceſſible in ſo many places by ſea.

It recommended an alien and ſedition law.

It recommended an invigoration of the treaſury, by ſeizing on all the taxable articles not yet taxed by the government.—And laſtly,

It recommended a national Faſt, not only on account of the intrinſic propriety of it, but becauſe we ſhould be very unſkilful if we neglected to avail ourſelves of the religious feelings of the people in a criſis ſo difficult and dangerous. There might be more, but theſe are all that I now recollect.

Mr. Hamilton's imagination was always haunted by that hidious monſter or phantom, ſo often called a *Criſis* and which ſo often produces imprudent meaſures.

How it happened that Mr. Hamilton's contemplations coincided ſo exactly with mine, as to think of Mr. Jefferſon or Mr. Madiſon for envoy to France, it may be more difficult to explain. But let it be conſidered that this letter was written long after my converſation with Mr. Jef-

ferſon, concerning himſelf and Mr. Madiſon, which was the morning after my inauguration; that I had communicated that converſation to one or more of the heads of departments the ſame morning. It is probable, therefore, that Mr. Hamilton received hints from ſome of his correſpondents that I had thought of Madiſon and Hamilton, and that he was not diſpleaſed with the idea. I aſked one of the heads of departments how he could account for Hamilton's recommending Jefferſon or Madiſon? "Why," ſaid the gentleman, "I ſuppoſe Hamilton is weary of his practice, as an attorney, at New-York, and is willing to enter into ſome other employment." Mr. Hamilton, however, might thank thoſe who had been his warmeſt friends for his diſappointment: for had it not been for their oppoſition to Madiſon, I ſhould have appointed him and Hamilton.

The army of fifty thouſand men, ten thouſand of them to be horſe, appeared to me to be one of the wildeſt extravagancies of a Knight Errant. It proved to me that Mr. Hamilton knew no more of the ſentiments and feelings of the people of America, than he did of thoſe of the inhabitants of one of the planets. Such an army without an enemy to combat, would have raiſed a rebellion in every ſtate in the Union. The very idea of the expence of it would have turned Preſident, Senate and Houſe out of doors. I adopted none of theſe chimeras into my ſpeech, and only recommended the raiſing of a few regiments of artillery to garriſon the fortifications of the moſt expoſed places. Yet ſuch was the influence of Mr. Hamilton in Congreſs, that, without any recommendation from the Preſident, they paſſed a bill to raiſe an army, not a large one, indeed, but enough to overturn the then federal government.

Nor did I adopt his idea of an alien or ſedition law. I recommended no ſuch thing in my ſpeech. Congreſs, however, adopted both theſe meaſures. I knew there was need enough of both, and therefore I conſented to them. But as they were then conſidered as war meaſures, and intended altogether againſt the advocates of the

French and peace with France, I was apprehenſive that a hurricane of clamor would be raiſed againſt them, as in truth there was, even more fierce and violent than I had anticipated.

Seizing on all the taxable articles not yet taxed, to ſupport an army of fifty thouſand men, at a time when ſo many tax laws, already enacted, were unexecuted in ſo many ſtates, and when inſurrections and rebellions had already been excited in Pennſylvania, on account of taxes, appeared to me altogether deſperate, altogether delirious.

I wanted no admonition from Mr. Hamilton to inſtitute a national faſt. I had determined on this meaſure long enough before Mr. Hamilton's letter was written. And here let me ſay, with great ſincerity, that I think there is nothing upon this earth more ſublime and affecting, than the idea of a great nation all on their knees at once before their God, acknowledging their faults and imploring his bleſſing and protection, when the proſpect before them threatens great danger and calamity. It can ſcarcely fail to have a favorable effect on their morals in general, or to inſpire them with warlike virtues in particular. When moſt, if not all the religious ſects in the nation hold ſuch faſts among themſelves, I never could ſee the force of the objections againſt making them, on great and extraordinary occaſions, national ; unleſs it be the jealouſy of the ſeparate ſtates, leſt the general government ſhould become too national. Thoſe however, who differ from me in opinion on this point, have as good a right to their judgment as I have to mine, and I ſhall ſubmit mine to the general will.

In fine, Mr. Hamilton, in the paſſage I have been commenting upon, in this letter, has let out facts, which if he had poſſeſſed a grain of common ſenſe, he would have wiſhed ſhould be forever concealed. I ſhould never have revealed or explained them if he, and his partizans, had not compelled me.

JOHN ADAMS.

Quincy, May 29, 1809.

LETTER XIV.

IN page 25, is a ſtrain of flimſy rant, as ſilly as it is indecent. "The ſupplement to the declaration was a blameable exceſs. It waved the point of honor, which after two rejections of our miniſters, required that the next miſſion ſhould proceed from France."

Where did he find this point of honor? If any ſuch point had exiſted, it had its full force againſt the ſecond miſſion: and its principal force conſiſted in the formal declaration of the directory, that it "never would receive another miniſter plenipotentiary without apologies for the preſident's ſpeeches, and anſwers to addreſſes." If we had a right to wave this point of honor in one inſtance, we had in two: eſpecially as one member of the ſecond miſſion, was the ſame man who had been rejected in the firſt. But after the explicit retraction of the declaration that they would not receive a miniſter without apologies, the point of honor was completely done away. To give them an opportunity of retracting that declaration, I declared in my meſſage to Congreſs, that I would not ſend another miniſter to France, till this declaration was retracted by aſſurances that he ſhould be received in character. They embraced the opportunity cordially, when they might have avoided the humiliation by ſending a miniſter here. And whatever Hamilton's opinion might be, I knew that they might have negociated more to their advantage here than at Paris. Hamilton's fingers had not the tact, or tactility, if you like the word better, of the public pulſe.

In page 27, he argues the probability that France would have ſent a miniſter here from the fact that ſhe did afterwards "ſtifle her reſentments, and invite the renewal of negociation." I know not whether this is an example of Mr. Hamilton's "Analyſis of Inveſtigation" or not. It is an argument a Poſteriori. It is reaſoning upward or backward.

Theſe invitations were not known nor made, when I pledged myſelf by implication at leaſt, to ſend a miniſter,

when ſuch invitations ſhould be made. When they were made I conſidered my own honor and the honor of the government committed. And I have not a doubt that Hamilton thought ſo too: and that one of his principal vexations was that neither himſelf nor his privy counſellors could have influence enough with me to perſuade or intimidate me to diſgrace myſelf in the eyes of the people of America and the world, by violating my parole.

This he might think would aſſiſt him in his caucuſes at New-York and Philadelphia, where the honor, not only of every member, but of every ſtate and every elector was to be pledged, to give an equal vote for Pinckney and Adams, that the choice of Preſident ſhould be left to the Houſe of Repreſentatives, whoſe members on the day of election, or the day before, were to be furniſhed with this pamphlet, ſpick and ſpun, to make ſure of *the ſacrifice* of Adams. But more of this hereafter.

In the mean time what reaſons had we to expect that the French government would ſend a miniſter here? Such an idea had been whiſpered in private converſation perhaps, by Dr. Logan and ſome others; but we had not a color of official information to that effect, that I remember. What motives had the French to ſend a miniſter? They had committed depredations upon our commerce to the amount, it has been ſaid, of twenty millions of dollars. Would the Directory have been animated with any great zeal to ſend an ambaſſador to offer us compenſation for theſe ſpoliations at a time when they were driven to their wit's ends to find revenues and reſources to carry on the war in Europe, and break the confederations againſt them?

We had declared the treaty of alliance and all treaties between France and the United States, null and void.—Do we ſuppoſe the French government would have been in haſte to ſend an ambaſſador to offer us a ſolemn revocation, by treaty, of all former treaties? What urgent motive could the French have to be in haſte to ſend a miniſter? They could not be apprehenſive that we ſhould ſend an army to Europe to conquer France, or aſſiſt her

enemies. We had no naval power sufficient to combat their navy in Europe, which was then far from being reduced as it has been since. They had no commerce or mercantile navigation, upon which our little navy or privateers could have made reprisals.

There is but one motive that I can imagine should have stimulated them very much, and that is, the apprehension that we might enter into an alliance offensive and defensive with Great Britain. This they might have considered as a serious affair to them in a course of time, though they might not fear any very immediate harm from it. But I doubt not the French had information from a thousand emissaries, and Talleyrand knew from personal observation in various parts of America, and Hamilton must have known, if he had any feeling of the popular pulse, that a vast majority of the people of America dreaded an alliance with Great Britain more than they did a war with France. It would have taken a long time, it would have required a long and bloody war with France, and a violent exasperation of the public mind to have reconciled the people to any such measure. No, Hamilton and his associates could not have seriously believed that the French would soon send a minister here. If they had not, or if they had delayed it, Hamilton would have continued at the head of his army—continual provocations and irritations would have taken place between the two nations, till one or the other would have declared war. In the mean time it was my opinion then, and has been ever since, that the two parties in the United States would have broken out into a civil war ; a majority of all the states to the southward of Hudson river, united with nearly half New England, would have raised an army under Aaron Burr ; a majority of New England might have raised another under Hamilton—Burr would have beat Hamilton to pieces, and what would have followed next, let the prophets foretell. But such would have been the result of Hamilton's " enterprizes of great pith and moment." I say this would probably have been the course and result of things, had a majority of New England con-

tinued to be attached to Hamilton, his men, and measures. But I am far from believing this. On the contrary, had not our envoys proceeded, had not the people expected a peace with France from that negociation, New England herself, at the elections of 1800, would have turned out Hamilton's whole party, and united with the southern and middle states in bringing in men who might have made peace on much less advantageous terms.

And now let the world judge who "consulted much" —who "pondered much"—who "resolved slowly"— and who "resolved surely."

JOHN ADAMS.

Quincy, June 5, 1809.

LETTER XV.

IN page 28, Mr. HAMILTON acknowledges that "the President had pledged himself in his speech, (he should have said in his message) to send a minister, if satisfactory assurances of a proper reception were given." Notwithstanding this, Mr. Hamilton, and all his confidential friends, exerted their utmost art and most strenuous endeavors to prevail on the President to violate this pledge. What can any man think of the disposition of these men towards the personal or official character of the President? But that they were secretly, if not avowedly, his most determined and most venomous enemies? When the measure had been solemnly, irrevocably determined, and could not be recalled nor delayed without indelible dishonor, I own I was astonished, I was grieved, I was afflicted, to see such artificial schemes employed, such delays studied, such embarrassments thrown in the way, by men who were, or at least ought to have been my bosom friends.

This was a point of honor indeed: not such a stupid, fantastical point of honor as that which Mr. Hamilton maintains with so much fanaticism, and so much folly:

but a point of honor in which my moral character was involved as well as the public faith of the nation. Hamilton's point of honor was such as one of those Irish duellists, who love fighting better than feasting, might have made a pretext for sending a challenge—and however conformable it might be to Hamilton's manner of thinking, it was altogether inconsistent with the moral, religious, and political character of the people of America.

It was such a point of honor as a Machiavilian or a Jesuit might have made a pretext for a war. It was such a point of honor as a Roman senate, in the most corrupt days of that republic, might have made a pretext for involving the nation in a foreign war, when Patrician monopolies of land, and Patrician usury at twelve per cent a month, had excited the Plebeian debtors to the crisis of a civil war. But the American people were not Roman Plebeians. They were not to be deceived by such thin disguises.

Surely those who have lately censured Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Madison, for insisting on knowing the satisfaction which was to be given for the outrage on the Chesapeake, before they revoked a certain proclamation, can never blame me for not insisting on a point that was no point of honor at all.

In page 28, Mr. Hamilton says, "When the President pledged himself in his speech, (he should have said his message) to send a minister, if satisfactory assurances of a proper reception were given, he must have been understood to mean such as were *direct* and *official*, not such as were both *informal and destitute of a competent sanction.*"

The words "direct and indirect," "official and inofficial," "formal and informal," "competent sanction," &c. appear to have seized this gentleman's mind, and to have rolled and tumbled in it, till they had produced an entire confusion of his understanding.

He here supposes that I did not understand my own message, and patriotically undertakes to expound it both for me and the public. According to his metaphysics, I meant, by assurances of a proper reception, assurances di-

rect and official, not such as were informal. Let me ask, what more formal or official assurances could have been given than Talleyrand's letters? What more formal, official, or direct, than Mr. Gerry's letters? If I understand Mr. Hamilton, he must have meant to say that my message demanded an ambassador to be sent directly from the Directory to me, for the express purpose of assuring me that they would receive a minister plenipotentiary from me. This, instead of being my meaning was directly the reverse of it. From first to last I had refused to be taken in this snare. I had always refused to demand that a minister should be sent here first, though I had declared explicitly enough in my speech, that a French minister, if sent, should be received. I had always insisted that both the doors of negociation should be held open. And as I have already said I now repeat, that I preferred to send a minister rather than receive one: not only for the reasons explained in a former letter, but because I thought the amende honorable ought to be made at Paris where the offence was given; where it would be known and observed by all Europe—whereas if it had been made at Philadelphia, little notice would have been taken of it by any part of the world.

I am somewhat disappointed in not finding in this pamphlet the word "obscure" applied to Mr. Pichon, because the newspapers in Boston, New-York, and Philadelphia, written by Mr. Hamilton's coadjutors and fellow-laborers in the same field of scandal, had profusely scattered their dull sarcasms on the obscurity of the agent or agents at the Hague. Mr. Pichon obscure? A secretary of legation and charge des affaires obscure! Especially in the absence of his ambassador? The office of secretary of legation is an object of ambition and desire to many of the first scientific and literary characters in Europe. The place is worth about a thousand guineas a year, and affords a fine opportunity and great advantages for travel, and is commonly a sure road to promotion. These secretaries are almost always men of science, letters and business. They are often more relied upon than the ambassadors themselves

for the substantial part of business. Ambassadors are often chosen for their birth, rank, title, riches, beauty, elegance of manners, or good humor. They are intended to do honor to their sovereigns by their appearance and representation. Secretaries of legation are selected for their science, learning, talents, industry and habits of business. I doubt not Mr. Locke or Sir Isaac Newton in their younger days would have thought themselves fortunate to have been offered such a place. Would these have been called obscure? Was Matthew Prior or David Hume obscure? Yet both of them were secretaries of legation.

Such reflections as these which were thrown upon Mr. Pichon might impose upon a people who knew no better than the writers, but must have been despised by every man who knew any thing of the world.

Had Talleyrand sent his letters to General Washington to be communicated to me, had he sent them directly to my Secretary of State, had he sent them to the Spanish minister to be by him communicated to the Secretary of State, or to the Dutch minister for the same purpose, I do not say that I would have nominated a minister in consequence of them; nor will I say that I would not. There is no need to determine this question, because in fact the utmost rigor of diplomatic etiquette was observed. But I will say that my message demanded nothing but evidence to convince my own mind and give satisfaction to the Senate and the public, that a minister would be received. And if such evidence had arrived to me, in any manner that would leave no doubt in the public mind, I would not have sacrificed the national neutrality to any diplomatic trammels or shackles whatever.

JOHN ADAMS.

Quincy, June 6, 1809.

LETTER XVI.

IN page 26, Mr. Hamilton ſays, that the miſſion "could hardly fail to injure our intereſts with other countries."

This is another of thoſe phantoms which he had conjured up to terrify minds and nerves as weak as his own. It was a common place theme of diſcourſe, which, no doubt, the Britiſh faction very efficaciouſly aſſiſted him in propagating. I know it made impreſſion on ſome, from whoſe lips I too often heard it, and from whom I expected more ſenſe and firmneſs. It appeared to me ſo mean, ſervile and timorous, that I own I did not always hear it with patience.

Which were thoſe other countries? They could not be Spain, Holland, or any countries in the north or ſouth of Europe which were in alliance with France or under her obedience. They could be only England, Ruſſia, and Sweden: for we had nothing to do with any but maritime powers. And what intereſt of ours could be injured with any of theſe powers? Would any of theſe powers make war upon us, and ſacrifice the benefits they received from our commerce, becauſe we made peace with France, aſſerted and maintained our impartial neutrality, and ſtipulated nothing inconſiſtent with their rights, honor, or dignity? If ſuch chimerical fears as theſe were to govern our conduct, it was idle to talk of our independence. We might as well petition the King and Parliament of Great Britain to take us again under their gracious protection.

In page 36, he ſays, I "might ſecretly and confidentially have nominated one or more of our miniſters actually abroad for the purpoſe of treating with France, with eventual inſtructions predicated upon appearances of an approaching peace."

Mr. Hamilton had entirely forgot the conſtitution of the United States. All nominations muſt be made to the Senate, and if the Preſident requeſts, and the Senate enjoins ſecrecy, ſecrecy will not be kept. Stephens Thomp-

ſon Maſon was then a member of the Senate—and if he had not been, there were twenty other means of communicating the thing to the public. Had ſecrecy been requeſted and enjoined when Mr. Murray was nominated, every man whoſe emulation was mortified, would have had the ſecret in three hours. But had the ſecret been kept, Mr. Murray muſt have gone to Paris with his full powers, or muſt have communicated them to Mr. Pichon —the French government muſt have appointed a miniſter to treat with him—their full powers muſt have been exchanged—neither the French government nor their miniſter would have kept it ſecret. And why all this cunning? That we might not give umbrage to England. This very motive, if there had been any thing in it, would have induced the French to proclaim it to all Europe. In truth, ſuch a ſneaking idea never entered my brain, and if it had, I would have ſpurned it as unworthy a moment's conſideration. Beſides, this would have been the very indirect, circuitous mode that Mr. Hamilton ſo deeply deplores.

In page 37, another inſtance is given of my jealouſy, and ſuſpicious diſpoſition. The moſt open, unſuſpicious man alive, is accuſed of exceſſive ſuſpicion.

I tranſiently aſked one of the heads of departments, whether Ellſworth and Hamilton had come all the way from Windſor and New-York, to perſuade me to countermand the miſſion. How came Mr. Hamilton to be informed of this?

I know of no motive of Mr. Ellſworth's journey. However, I have already acknowledged that Mr. Ellſworth's conduct was perfectly proper. He urged no influence, or argument, for counteracting or poſtponing the miſſion.

Unſuſpicious as I was, I could not reſiſt the evidence of my ſenſes. Hamilton, unaſked, had volunteered his influence with all the arguments his genius could furniſh, all the eloquence he poſſeſſed, and all the vehemence of action his feeble frame could exert. He had only betrayed his want of information, and his ardent zeal to induce me to break my word and violate the faith of the

government. I know of no buſineſs he had at Trenton. Indeed I knew, that in ſtrict propriety he had no right to come to Trenton at all without my leave. He was ſtationed at Newark, in the command of his diviſion of the army, where he ought to have been employed in accommodating, diſciplining, and teaching tactics to his troops, if he had been capable of it. He wiſely left theſe things to another officer, who underſtood them better, but whom he hated for that very reaſon.

I have no more to ſay upon this great jubject. Indeed I am weary of expoſing puerilities that would diſgrace the awkwardeſt boy at college.

JOHN ADAMS.

Quincy, June 7, 1809.

LETTER XVII.

IN page 20, Mr. Hamilton ſays, my "conduct in the office of Preſident was a heterogeneous compound of right and wrong, of wiſdom and error." As at that time, in my opinion, his principal rule of right and wrong, of wiſdom and error, was his own ambition and indelicate pleaſures, I deſpiſe his cenſure, and ſhould conſider his approbation as a ſatire on my adminiſtration.

"The outſet," he ſays, "was diſtinguiſhed by a ſpeech which his friends lamented as temporizing. It had the air of a lure for the favor of his opponents at the expenſe of his ſincerity." Until I read this, I never heard one objection to that ſpeech, and I have never heard another ſince, except in a letter from a lady, who ſaid ſhe did not like it, becauſe there was but one period in it, and that period was too long. I fully agreed to that lady's opinion, and now thank her for her criticiſm. Since that time I have never heard nor read, except in Wood's Hiſtory, any objection or criticiſm.

That addreſs was dictated by the ſame ſpirit which produced my conference the next day with Mr. Jefferſon, in

which I propoſed to him the idea of ſending him to France, and the more ſerious thought of nominating Mr. Madiſon. It ſprung from a very ſerious apprehenſion of danger to our country, and a ſenſe of injuſtice to individuals, from that arbitrary and excluſive principle of faction which confines all employments and promotions to its own favorites. There is a diſtinction founded in truth and nature, between party and faction. The former is founded in principle and ſyſtem, concerning the public good; the latter in private intereſt and paſſions. An honeſt party man will never exclude talents and virtues, and qualities eminently uſeful to the public, merely on account of a difference in opinion. A factious man will exclude every man alike, ſaint or ſinner, who will not be a blind, paſſive tool. If I had been allowed to follow my own ideas, Hamilton and Burr, in my opinion, with ſubmiſſion to Divine Providence, would have been alive at this hour—General Muhlenburg, of Pennſylvania, would have been a Brigadier, under Hamilton, in the army, as long as it laſted; and the great body of Germans in Pennſylvania, inſtead of being diſgraced with imputations of rebellion, would have been good friends of government. I have not room to develope all this at preſent.

But I ſoon found myſelf ſhackled. The heads of departments were excluſive patriots. I could not name a man who was not devoted to Hamilton, without kindling a fire.

The Senate was now decidedly federal. During Preſident Waſhington's whole adminiſtration of eight years, his authority in the Senate was extremely weak. The Senate was equally divided in all great conſtitutional queſtions, and in all great queſtions of foreign relations, and ſuch as were the moſt ſharply conteſted were brought to my deciſion as Vice-Preſident.

When I was elected, the ſtates had been pleaſed to make an entire change in the Senate. Two thirds of that honorable body were now decidedly federal. And proſperity had its uſual effect, on federal minds. It made them confident and preſumptuous. I ſoon found, that if I had

not the previous conſent of the heads of departments, and the approbation of Mr. Hamilton, I run the utmoſt riſque of a dead negative in the Senate. One ſuch negative at leaſt I had, after a very formal and a very uncivil remonſtrance of one of their large, unconſtitutional committees in ſecret.

I have great reaſon to believe, that Mr. Jefferſon came into office with the ſame ſpirit that I did—that is, with a ſincere deſire of conciliating parties, as far as he poſſibly could, conſiſtently with his principles. But he ſoon found, as I did, that the Senate had a decided majority of republicans, five or ſix to one, a much greater majority than there was in my time, of federaliſts, which were never more than two to one.

In the Houſe of Repreſentatives, in Mr. Waſhington's time, the majority of federaliſts was very ſmall. In my time, it was ſomewhat larger, but ſtill ſmall. In Mr. Jefferſon's time, the majority of republicans was immenſe, two or three, or four, to one. Conſciouſneſs of this ſtrength had the ſame effect upon republicans as it had upon federaliſts in my time. It made them confident, excluſive, and preſumptuous. Mr. Jefferſon found it impoſſible, as I did, to follow his own inclination on many occaſions.

It may be thought preſumption in me to impute errors to the nation; but as I have never concealed from the people any truth which it was important to them to know, nor any opinion of my own, which was material in public affairs, I hope to be excuſed if I ſuggeſt that the general ſentiment in moſt parts of the continent, that all the danger to liberty ariſes from the executive power, and that the Preſident's office cannot be too much reſtrained, is an error.

Corruption in almoſt all free governments has begun and been firſt introduced in the Legiſlature. When any portion of executive power has been lodged in popular or ariſtocratical aſſemblies, it has ſeldom, if ever, failed to introduce intrigue. The executive powers lodged in the Senate are the moſt dangerous to the conſtitution and to

liberty of all the powers in it. The people then ought to conſider the Preſident's office as the indiſpenſible guardian of their rights. I have ever, therefore, been of opinion, that the electors of Preſident ought to be choſen by the people at large. The people cannot be too careful in the choice of their Preſidents; but when they have choſen them, they ought to expect that they will act their own independent judgments, and not be wheedled nor intimidated by factious combinations of Senators, Repreſentatives, heads of departments, or military officers.

The excluſive principle which has been adopted, and too openly avowed by both our great diviſions, when the pendulum has ſwung to their ſide, is a principle of faction, and not of honeſt party. It is intolerance! It is deſpotiſm! It deſtroys the freedom of the preſs! The freedom of elections! the freedom of debate! the freedom of deliberation! the freedom of private judgment! And as long as the Senate ſhall be determined to negative all but their own party, the Preſident can have no will or judgment of his own. I moſt earneſtly entreat all parties to reconſider their reſolutions on this ſubject.

JOHN ADAMS.

Quincy, June 8, 1809.

LETTER XVIII.

IN page 29, Mr. Hamilton ſays, "when an ordinary man dreams himſelf to be a Frederick," &c.

To this I ſhall make but a ſhort anſwer. When a Miss of the ſtreet ſhall print a pamphlet in London, and call the Queen of England an ordinary woman, who dreams herſelf a Catharine of Ruſſia, no Engliſhman will have the leſs eſteem for his queen for that impudent libel.

There is ſomething in the 24th page, of a graver complexion. It is ſaid, that the ſeſſion which enſued the promulgation of the diſpatches of our commiſſioners was about to commence. This was the ſeſſion of 1798. Mr.

Adams arrived at Philadelphia. The tone of his mind ſeemed to be raiſed."

Let me aſk a candid public, how did Mr. Hamilton know any thing of the *tone* of Mr. Adams's mind, either before or at that conference? To make the compariſon, he muſt have known the ſtate of Mr. Adams's mind at both theſe periods. He had never converſed with Mr. Adams before, nor was he preſent at that conference.—Who was the muſician that took the pitch of Mr. Adams's mind, at the two moments here compared together? And what was the muſical inſtrument, or whoſe exquiſite ear was it that aſcertained ſo nicely the vibrations of the air, and Mr. Adams's ſenſibility to them? Had Mr. Hamilton a ſpy in the cabinet, who tranſmitted to him, from day to day, the confidential communications between the Preſident and heads of department? If there exiſted ſuch a ſpy, why might he not communicate theſe conferences to Mr. Liſton, or the Marquis Yrujo, as well as to Mr. Hamilton? He had as clear a right. I believe that all the privy councillors of the world but our own, are under an oath of ſecrecy; and ours ought to be. But as they are not, their own honor and ſenſe of propriety ought, with them, to be obligations as ſacred as an oath.

The truth is, I had arrived at Philadelphia, from a long journey, which had been delayed longer than I intended, very much fatigued; and as no time was to be loſt, I ſent for the heads of departments, to conſult, in the evening, upon the points to be inſerted in the ſpeech to Congreſs, who were ſoon to meet.

My intention was, in the language of the lawyers, merely to break the queſtions, or meet the points neceſſary for us to conſider; not intending to expreſs any opinion of my own, or to requeſt any opinion of theirs upon any point; but merely to take the queſtions into their conſideration, and give me their advice upon all of them at a future meeting.

I obſerved, that I found, by various ſources of information, and particularly by ſome of the newſpapers in Boſton and New-York, that there was a party who ex-

pected an unqualified recommendation of a declaration of war againſt France.

Theſe paragraphs, I was well ſatisfied, were written by gentlemen who were in the confidence and correſpondence of Hamilton and one of the heads of departments at leaſt, though I gave them no intimation of this.

I ſaid to the gentlemen, that I ſuppoſed it would be expected of us, that we ſhould conſider this queſtion, and be able to give our reaſons for the determination, whatever it might be.

The conduct of the gentlemen upon this queſtion was ſuch as I wiſhed it to be upon all the others. Not one of them gave an opinion either for or againſt a declaration of war. There was ſomething, however, in the total ſilence and reſerve of all of them, and in the countenances of ſome, that appeared to me to be the effect of diſappointment. It ſeemed to me, that they expected I ſhould have propoſed a declaration of war, and only aſked their advice to ſanction it. However, not a word was ſaid.

That there was a diſappointment, however, in Hamilton and his friends, is apparent enough, from this conſideration—that when it was known that a declaration of war was not to be recommended in the Preſident's ſpeech, a caucus was called of members of Congreſs, to ſee if they could not get a vote for a declaration of war, without any recommendation from the Preſident, as they had voted the alien and ſedition law, and the army. What paſſed in that caucus, and how much zeal there was in ſome, and who they were, judge Sewall can tell better than I. All that I ſhall ſay, is, that Mr. Hamilton's friends could not carry the vote.

My ſecond propoſition to the heads of departments was to conſider, in caſe we ſhould determine againſt a declaration of war, what was the ſtate of our relations with France, and whether any further attempt at negociation ſhould be made.

Inſtead of the ſilence and reſerve with which my firſt queſtion was received, Mr. Hamilton ſhall relate what was ſaid.

Mr. Hamilton says, "It was suggested to him, (Mr. Adams,) that it might be expedient to insert in the speech, a sentiment of this import, that after the repeatedly rejected advances of this country, its dignity required that it should be left with France, in future, to make the first overture; that if desirous of reconciliation, she should evince the disposition, by sending a minister to this government, he would be received with the respect due to his character, and treated with, in the frankness of a sincere desire of accommodation. The suggestion was received in a manner both indignant and intemperate."

I demand again, how did Mr. Hamilton obtain this information? Had he a spy in the cabinet? If he had, I own I had rather that all the courts in Europe should have had spies there; for they could have done no harm by any true information they could have obtained there; whereas Hamilton has been able to do a great deal of mischief, by the pretended information he has published.

It is very true, that I thought this proposition intended to close the avenues to peace, and to ensure a war with France; for I did believe that some of the heads of departments were confident, in their own minds, that France would not send a minister here.

From the intimate intercourse between Hamilton and some of the heads of departments, which is demonstrated to the world and to posterity, by this pamphlet, I now appeal to every candid and impartial man, whether there is not reason to suspect and to believe, whether there is not a presumption, a violent presumption, that Hamilton himself had furnished this machine to his correspondent in the cabinet, for the very purpose of ensnaring me, at unawares, of ensuring a war with France, and enabling him to mount his hobby horse, the command of an army of fifty thousand, ten thousand of them to be horse?

Hamilton says, "the suggestion was received in a manner both indignant and intemperate." This is false. It is true, it was urged with so much obstinacy, perseverance and indecency, not to say intemperance, that at last I declared I would not adopt it, in clear and strong terms.

Mr. Hamilton says, "Mr. Adams declared, as a sentiment he had adopted on mature reflection, that if France should send a minister here to-morrow, he would order him back the day after."

Here I ask again, where, how, and from whom did he get this information? Was it from his spy in the cabinet? Or was it the fabrication of his own "sublimated, excentric," and intemperate imagination? In either case, it is an entire misrepresentation.

I said that when in my retirement at Quincy, the idea of the French government sending a minister here, had sometimes occurred to me, my first thoughts were, that I would send him back the next day after his arrival, as a retaliation for their sending ours back; and because the affront offered to us had been at Paris, publicly, in the face of all Europe, the atonement ought to be upon the same theatre; and because, as the French government had publicly and officially declared that they would receive no minister plenipotentiary from the United States, until the President had made apologies for his speeches and answers to addresses, they ought to be made to retract and take back that rash declaration, on the same spot where it had been made. They might send a minister here, consistently with that offensive declaration.—This was my first thought; but upon mature reflection, I saw that this would not be justifiable; for, to retaliate one breach of principle by another breach of principle, was neither the morality nor the policy that had been taught me by my father and my tutors. Our principle was, that the right of embassy was sacred. I would therefore sacredly respect it, if they sent a minister here. But I would not foreclose myself from sending a minister to France, if I saw an opening for it, consistent with our honor; in short, that I would leave both doors and all doors wide open for a negociation. All this refutation came from myself, not from the heads of departments.

All that he says in this place and in the beginning of the next page, of my wavering, is false. My mind never underwent any revolution or alteration at all, after I left Quincy. I inserted no declaration in my speech, that I

would not send a minister to France; nor any declaration, that if France would give assurances of receiving a minister from this country, I would send one. Nothing like that declaration was ever made, except in my message to Congress, of the 21st of June, 1798, in these words:—"I will never send another minister to France, without assurances that he will be received, respected, and honored, as the representative of a great, free, powerful, and independent nation." This declaration finally effected the peace.

Both the doors of negociation were left open. The French might send a minister here without conditions—we might send one to France, upon condition, of a certainty that he would be received in character.

What conduct did the French government hold, in consequence of this declaration? They retracted their solemn and official declaration, that they would receive no minister plenipotentiary, in future, from the United States, without apologies from the President, for his speeches and answers to addresses. They withdrew, and expressly disavowed all claims of loans and douceurs, which had been held up in a very high tone. They even gave encouragement, I might say they promised, to make provision for an equitable compensation for spoliations. They promised to receive our ministers, and they did receive them, and made peace with them—a peace that completely accomplished a predominant wish of my heart for five and twenty years before, which was, to place our relations with France and with Great Britain, upon a footing of equality and impartiality, that we might be able to preserve, in future, an everlasting neutrality in all the wars of Europe.

I see now, with great pleasure, that England professes to acknowledge and adopt this our principle of impartiality, and I hope that France will soon adopt it too. The two powers ought to see, that it is the only principle we can adopt with safety to ourselves, or justice to them. If this is an error, it is an error in which I have been invariably and unchangeably fixed for five and thirty years,

in the whole courſe of which I have never ſeen reaſon to ſuſpect it to be an error, and I now deſpair of ever diſcovering any ſuch reaſons.

Nevertheleſs, Mr. Hamilton calls the declaration that accompliſhed all this, "a pernicious declaration!"

Pernicious it was to his views of ambition and domination. It extinguiſhed his hopes of being at the head of a victorious army of fifty thouſand men; without which, he uſed to ſay, he had no idea of having a head upon his ſhoulders for four years longer.

Thus it is, when ſelf-ſufficient ignorance impertinently obtrudes itſelf into offices and departments, in which it has no right, nor color, nor pretence to interfere.

Thus it is, when ambition undertakes to ſacrifice all characters, and the peace of nations, to its own private intereſt.

I have now finiſhed all I had to ſay on the negociations and peace with France, in 1800.—I find I muſt ſay ſomething of the peace with England, in 1783.

In the meantime, when I look back on the oppoſition and embarraſſments I had to overcome, from the faction of Britiſh ſubjects, from that large body of Americans who revere the Engliſh and abhor the French, from ſome of the heads of departments, from ſo many gentlemen in Senate, and ſo many more in the Houſe of Repreſentatives, and from the inſidious and dark intrigues as well as open remonſtrances of Mr. Hamilton, I am aſtoniſhed at the event.

In ſome of my jocular moments I have compared myſelf to an animal I have ſeen take hold of the end of a cord with his teeth and be drawn ſlowly up by pullies, through a ſtorm of ſquibs, crackers, and rockets, flaſhing and blazing round him every moment: and though the ſcorching flames made him groan, and mourn, and roar, he would not let go his hold till he had reached the ceiling of a lofty theatre, where he hung ſometime, ſtill ſuffering a flight of rockets, and at laſt deſcended through another ſtorm of burning powder, and never let go, till his four feet were ſafely landed on the floor.

In some of my social hours I have quoted Virgil:

Fata obstant, placidasque viri Deus obstruit aures,
Ac velut annoso validam cum robore quercum
Alpini Boreæ nunc hinc nunc flatibus illinc
Eruere inter se certant; it stridor; et alte
Consternunt terram concusso stipite frondes:
Ipsa hæret scopulis: et quantum in vertice ad auras
Ætherias, tantum radice in Tartara tendit.
Haud secus assiduis hinc atque hinc vocibus heros
Tunditur, et magno persentit pectore curas.
Mens immota manet: lacrimæ volvuntur inanes. Lib. 4. 440.

His hardened heart nor prayers nor threatening move:
Fate and the Gods had stopp'd his ears,
As when the winds their airy quarrels try,
Justling from every quarter of the sky;
This way and that the mountain oak they bend,
His boughs they shatter, and his branches rend;
With leaves and falling mast, they spread the ground,
The hollow vallies to the echo sound:
Unmov'd the sturdy plant, their fury mocks,
Or shaken, clings more closely to the rocks:
Far as he shoots his towering head on high,
So deep in earth his deep foundations lie;
No less a storm the Trojan hero bears;
Thick messages and loud complaints he hears,
And bandied words still beating on his ears.
Sighs, groans and tears, proclaim his inward pains,
But the firm purpose of his heart remains.

Dryden, B. 4. 186.

But this is all levity. There have been sober hours, not a few: and I know not that there has been one, in which I have not adored that Providence of Almighty God, which alone could have carried me safely through, to a successful issue, this transaction and so many others, equally difficult, and infinitely more dangerous to my life, if not to my reputation.

JOHN ADAMS.

Quincy, June 10, 1809.

LETTER

From the Hon. E. Gerry, to Mons. C. M. Talleyrand.

[The following letter is in anſwer to an official note from Mons. T. publiſhed in the *Patriot* of May 20th. It caſts new light on the myſterious X. Y. Z. negociation, and will be read with intereſt by every one who wiſhes to ſee the complete juſtification of Mr. Gerry againſt the aſperſions of the French Machiavalian.]

Patriot, of Aug. 26.

To His Excellency
CHARLES MAURICE TALLEYRAND,
Late Miniſter of Foreign Relations, and now a Prince of Imperial France.

Sir—Your official letter, dated Paris, the 11th Fructidor, 6th year, (the 28th of Auguſt, 1798,) to Mr. Pichon, then Secretary of Legation at the Hague, has been lately publiſhed by his excellency Mr. Adams, late Preſident of the United States, and contains remarks on my conduct whilſt on the embaſſy you refer to, which leave no alternative but that of a public anſwer. To me it appears immaterial, whether your object in writing that letter, was merely to obtain the negociation which reſulted from it, or was intended to extend to perſonalities: for admitting the former, what apology can be offered for unmerited and unneceſſary cenſures on a preceding miniſter, in order to obtain a ſucceſſor? The letter ſtates, "that you uſed your endeavors to enter on a negociation with Mr. Gerry, in the ſpirit of ſubſtituting calmneſs for paſſion, and confidence for ſuſpicion, from a conviction that diſtruſt alone was the cauſe of the miſunderſtanding between the two republics." Admitting the fact, you will readily grant, ſir, that the *diſtruſt* on the part of the United States, exiſted long before the date of my commiſſion to negociate with France, and reſulted from a ſeries of meaſures on her part, highly injurious, and, as the United States conceived, unjuſt towards them. And have not the diſpatches of the three envoys to their gov-

ernment proved to a demonſtration, that the dark and crooked policy of negociating with them by ſecret agents, whom you recognized to me as having acted under your authority, increaſed that diſtruſt, and finally defeated the negociation? On the firſt approach of thoſe agents, ſo clearly was I convinced of what would be the reſult of conferences with them, as to have propoſed to my colleagues, to terminate their agency without delay, by the following declaration to them—viz: "To the queſtion whether the propoſitions, informally and confidentially communicated to us, *as private citizens*, at the requeſt, as is ſtated, of Mr. Talleyrand, in *his private capacity*, will be adopted as the baſis of a treaty? this anſwer is given: that it is highly probable ſome of the propoſitions communicated on the evenings of the 19th and 20th of October, (being the 28th and 29th Vendemaire) will be conſidered as the baſis of a project of a treaty, and others as *inadmiſſible*: BUT THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO DISCUSS THEM, OR TO COME TO A DECISION ON THEM, UNTIL THEY ARE PRESENTED TO US IN OUR OFFICIAL CHARACTERS." After the rupture of the negociation, by the diſmiſſion of my colleagues, and the publication throughout all Europe of our diſpatches, then indeed you "uſed," and it might be ſtated, you repeated, "your endeavors to enter on a negociation with myſelf;" not becauſe it was practicable, or promiſing ſucceſs, but becauſe it was neceſſary to allay the indignation of the French nation and directory againſt yourſelf, as the ſole cauſe of the rupture of the negociation with the three envoys. Can theſe facts, ſir, be controverted? Are they not fully proved by the diſpatches of the envoys, and by your correſpondence with myſelf?

Your letter next ſtates, "that your correſpondence with Mr. Gerry, until the day of his departure, is a curious monument of advances on your part, and of evaſions on his." That it is a curious monument of advances, or a monument of curious advances on your part, made with a conviction of the impoſſibility of their being accepted by him, is readily admitted: and permit him to enquire,

whether you urged him to enter on a negociation which was warranted by, or on one which was directly repugnant to, the powers given him by his government? You advocated his right to treat separately from his colleagues, because the government of the United States had commissioned, "jointly and severally, three envoys extraordinary and ministers plenipotentiary, of whom he was one, to treat with the French republic." Had his colleagues, by any other means than the agency of that republic, been disqualified from acting, then indeed he would have had a separate authority, and would have exercised it; but, sir, your political abilities require no arguments to prove, that a separate power was not by his commission given to one envoy to treat, when the others were by the French government officially charged with misconduct, and dismissed from the embassy. If solid reasons did actually exist for the dismission, was it not incumbent on the French Directory to have stated them to the government of the United States, that the latter might have corrected the evil? Was it your object, by urging that envoy to negociate separately, to induce him to a measure which would have terminated beneficially to the two republics, and honorably to the negociators, or to one, which, by his admitting the right of the French government to select one of the three envoys to proceed in the negociation, would have sacrificed, on his part, the rights, honor, and independence of his government, and disgraced himself? Let him enquire further, sir, whether you was authorised by the government of the United States, (for your own government could not authorise you,) to construe for their minister, the powers which they had delegated to him? Was it not, to say the least, indelicate to make the attempt, and unjust to refuse him the right of being governed in this construction by his own judgment? Could he have met the advances, of which you boast, with a due regard to the rights and independence of his country, or to his own honor? Most assuredly he could not, and for not meeting them, has he incurred your censure. As to the evasions with which you charge him, they were

refuſals, and you ſo conſidered them, to cloſe with your propoſitions. Your letter next ſtates, "that it is wrong to ſuppoſe you confined yourſelf to vague proteſtations, that among that ſeries of official letters, which will doubtleſs be publiſhed at Philadelphia, you ſelect one wherein he (Mr. Pichon) will ſee that you make very poſitive propoſitions, without any mixture of preliminary conditions. That this letter was followed by three notes upon the articles to be diſcuſſed, and that you intended to complete the others in this manner, if Mr. Gerry had not refuſed to anſwer thereto." But let any candid man read our correſpondence, and declare, if he can, that your proteſtations were not altogether vague, from the beginning to the end—did you not know before the publication of the diſpatches of the envoys, that ſuperior to pretexts, the envoy you had ſelected to negociate, declared himſelf, for the reaſons herein ſtated, unauthoriſed to treat? Did you not, in conſequence of thoſe reaſons, and from a conviction of their truth, pledge yourſelf to prepare *informally* with him, a treaty, and to ſend a miniſter to the American government for a ratification of it? And did you not, after the promulgation of the diſpatches, depart from the arrangements, and renew propoſitions long before made to, and rejected by him for treating ſeparately? If then, ſir, your proteſtations were not vague, why did you not, in the informal mode agreed on, diſcuſs fairly and ſubſtantially, the important ſubjects of the negociation? Why, in lieu thereof, did you propoſe a formal epiſtolary negociation, and even in this confine yourſelf to the correction of a conſular convention, which was ſoon to expire? Why did you not enter on the moſt important object, the project of a commercial treaty? Of what uſe, without ſuch a treaty, was a conſular convention? Your beginning with the ſmalleſt object of the negociation, and indeed your whole conduct in that diſcuſſion amounted, in my mind, to proof poſitive, that you was governed by no motive or expectation of attaining the important objects of the negociation, but that your ſole view, as before ſtated, was to amuſe the French govern-

ment and nation, and to divert from yourself their indignation, resulting from the rupture of the negociation. Your letter then proceeds, "when it became necessary to abandon the idea of treating with that envoy, *who thought it important only to know how a negociation might thereafter be resumed*, I gave him the most solemn assurances concerning the reception that a new plenipotentiary would receive." But did that envoy think it important only to know how a negociation might thereafter be resumed? You know, sir, he did not. In his letters to yourself of the 4th and 20th of April, 1798, the first being before, and the last subsequent to, the departure from Paris of one of his colleagues, he early proposed to "confer with you informally and unaccredited, on any subject respecting his mission, and to communicate to the government of the United States, the result of such conferences." He gave you, agreeably to your request, the outlines of such a treaty as he thought would have been acceptable to his government; and repeatedly urged you to come forward, on your part, with propositions "for terminating all differences, for the restoration of harmony and friendship; and for the re-establishment of commerce between the United States and France;" and to effect these objects, he assured you of his immediate and cheerful co-operation. Look at your correspondence with him, which you appear to have forgotten, and you will there find a record of these and numerous other facts, proving his unremitted exertions while in France, to establish a commercial treaty and restore harmony between the two republics. Is it not then much to be regretted, sir, that you have hazarded such unfounded assertions, and produced the painful necessity of detecting them?

Your letter then proceeds to state, "that you wished to encourage Mr. Gerry by testimonies of regard, that his good intentions merited." "Although you could not dissemble, that he wanted decision, at a moment when he might have easily adjusted every thing. That it does not thence follow, you designated him; that you will even avow, that you think him too irresolute to be fit to

haſten the concluſion of an affair of this kind." "Teſtimonies of regard," ſir, in negociations, inſpire neither courage or confidence : they are ſeldom ſucceſsfully practiſed and always illuſive ; and had you manifeſted ſuch to him, he muſt have candidly declared to you, "timeo danaos et dona ferentes." His primary object was to promote on principles of reciprocity, the honor, intereſt and welfare of his country. In the purſuit of theſe you was fully convinced that he was above encouragement, and that all your impediments and diſcouragements were of no avail.

That he "wanted deciſion" *to cloſe with your degrading propoſitions*, is conceded ; it is demonſtrated by the correſpondence you refer to ; and it therein appears alſo that he was "irreſolute" *to do wrong ;* an irreſolution which he frankly avows, which he prefers infinitely to "diplomatic ſkill ;" or diplomatic artifice, and which, permit him, ſir, from a long experience and full conviction that in public as well as in private concerns, "honeſty is the beſt policy," to reccommend to your conſideration and patronage.

As a duty which I owe to myſelf, I have tranſmitted copies of this letter to yourſelf, through French and American channels, which will enſure the delivery of it ; and had you adopted a ſimilar meaſure, by ſending to me a copy of your official letter to Mr. Pichon, in which you very freely uſe my character, you would have received an immediate anſwer.

Accept my aſſurances, ſir, of all due conſideration and reſpect,

E. GERRY.

Cambridge, July, 1809.